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Wagner et al.

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(54) **LIVE CONTENT STREAMING SYSTEM AND METHOD**

(58) **Field of Classification Search**
CPC G06Q 50/01; G06Q 10/10; H04N 21/4758; H04L 65/1069

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(Continued)

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(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 0 days.

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This patent is subject to a terminal disclaimer.

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Related U.S. Application Data

(57) **ABSTRACT**

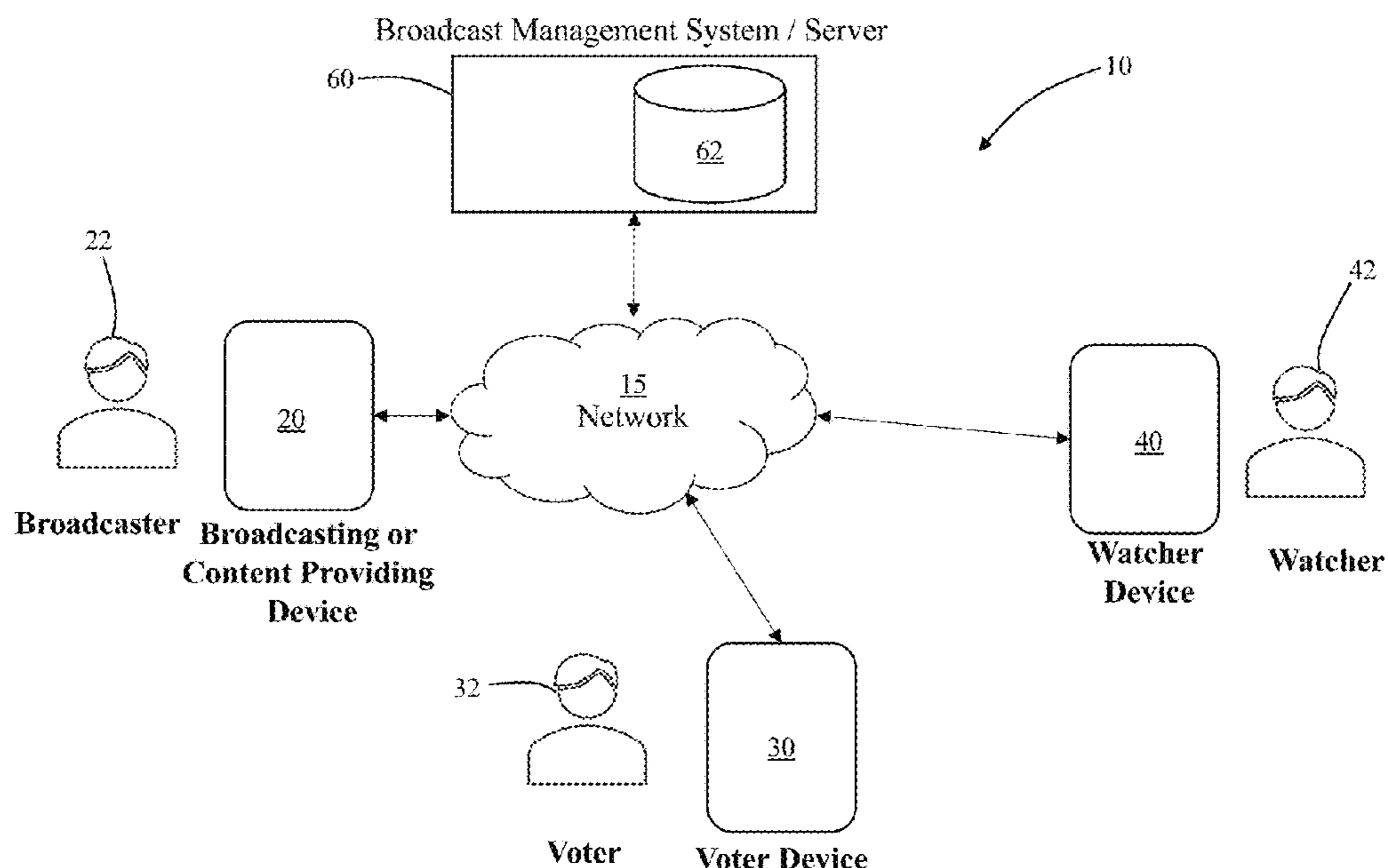
(63) Continuation-in-part of application No. 16/524,707, filed on Jul. 29, 2019, now Pat. No. 10,939,176, (Continued)

A live media streaming system and method is presented herein. The system and method includes broadcasting a live media stream in at least one of a plurality of themed broadcasting channels, the live media stream being transmitted from a broadcasting device corresponding to a broadcasting user. A jump zone (a physical region or area) is selected or defined based upon predetermined jump zone criteria corresponding to the at least one of the plurality of themed broadcasting channels. Further, a next broadcasting user is selected, wherein the user is located within the physical geographic region of the jump zone. Once the next broadcasting user is selected, a live media stream is broadcasted from the next user's broadcasting device.

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H04N 21/475 (2011.01)
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(Continued)

16 Claims, 22 Drawing Sheets



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- which is a continuation of application No. 15/183,305, filed on Jun. 15, 2016, now Pat. No. 10,368,134.
- (60) Provisional application No. 62/181,508, filed on Jun. 18, 2015.
- (51) **Int. Cl.**
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H04N 21/258 (2011.01)
H04L 65/1069 (2022.01)
H04N 21/436 (2011.01)
G06Q 10/10 (2023.01)
G06Q 50/00 (2012.01)
H04L 65/611 (2022.01)
- (52) **U.S. Cl.**
 CPC *H04L 65/1069* (2013.01); *H04L 65/611* (2022.05); *H04N 21/2187* (2013.01); *H04N 21/25841* (2013.01); *H04N 21/436* (2013.01)
- (58) **Field of Classification Search**
 USPC 709/231, 238, 201, 205
 See application file for complete search history.

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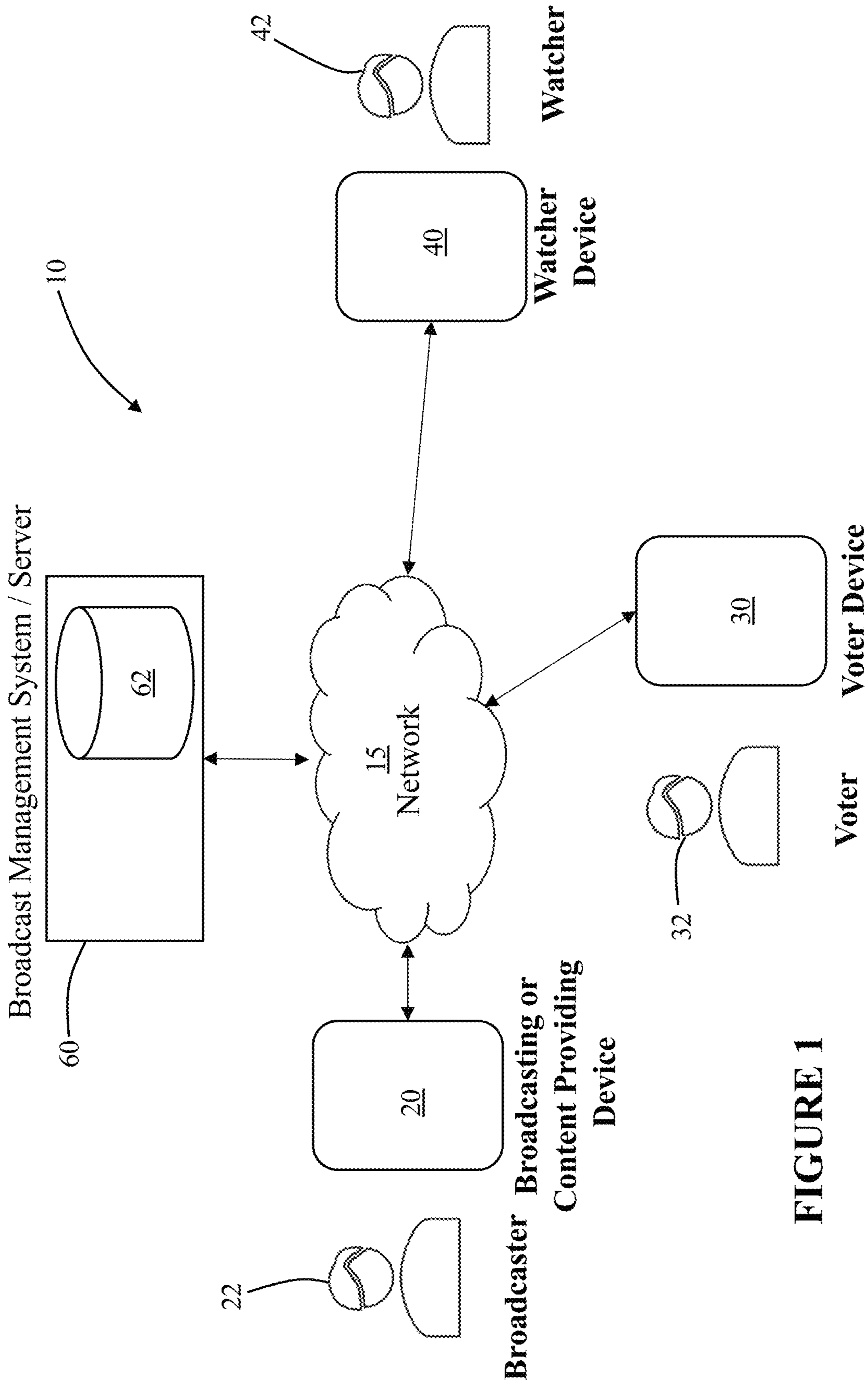


FIGURE 1

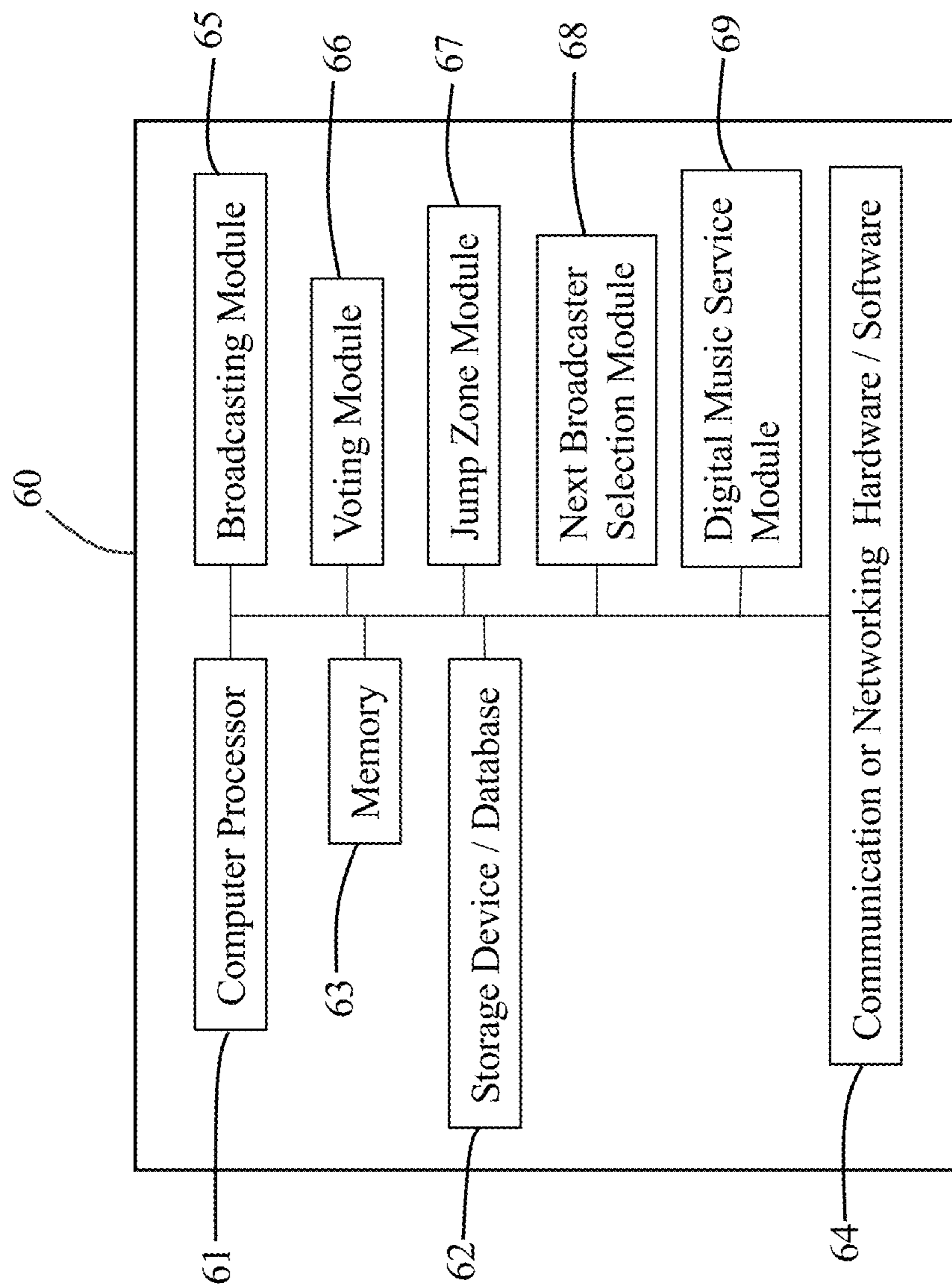


FIGURE 2

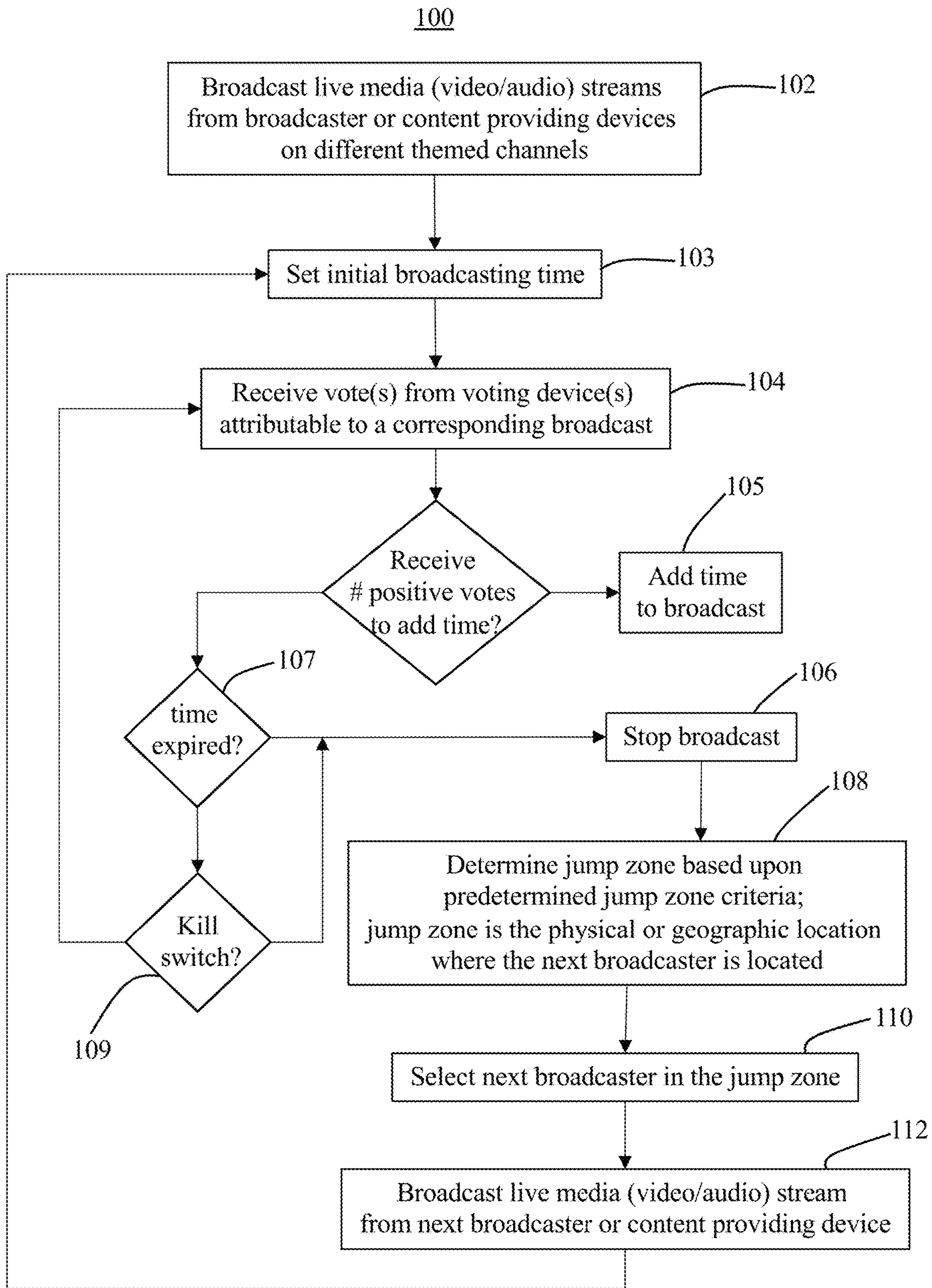


FIGURE 3

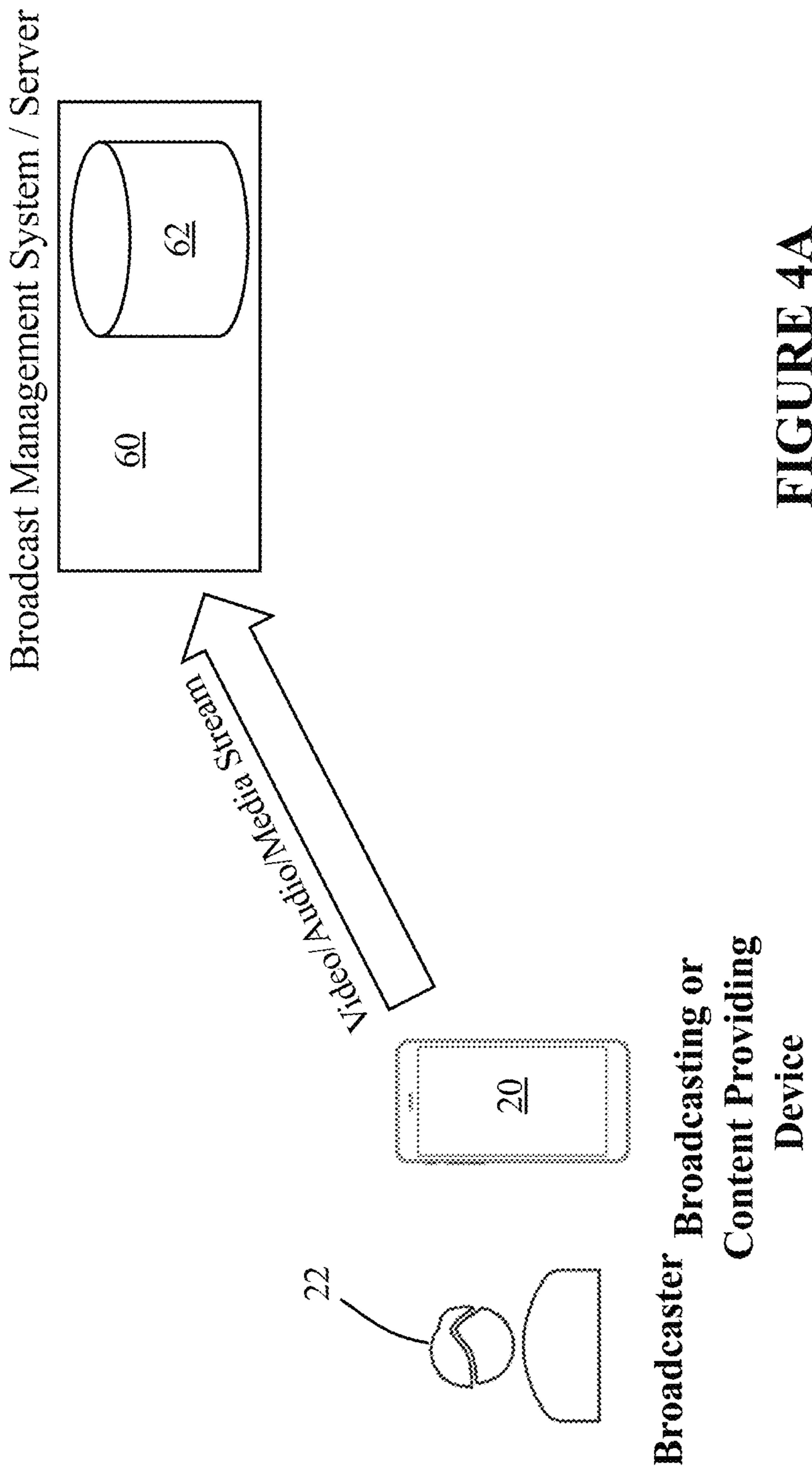


FIGURE 4A

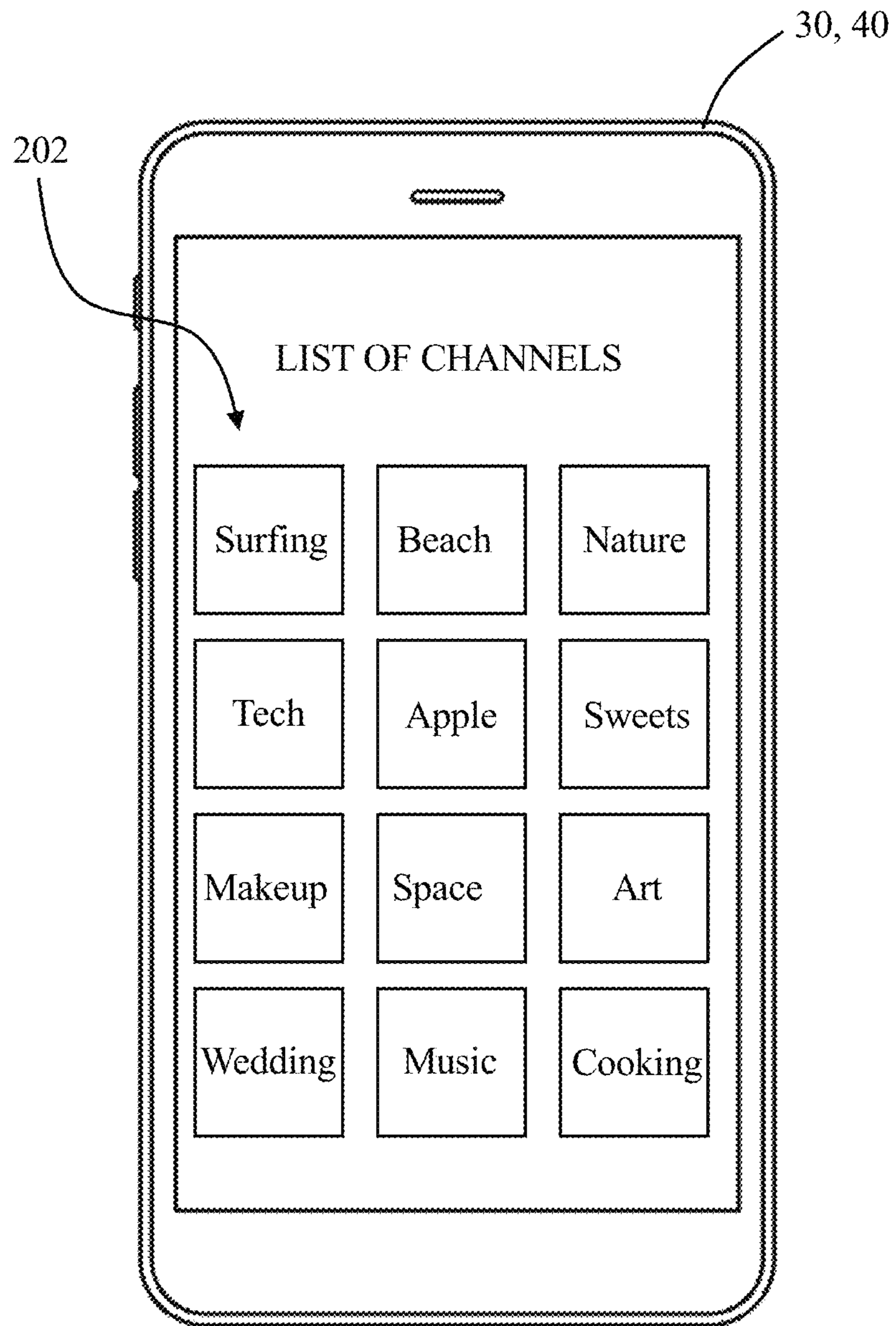


FIGURE 4B

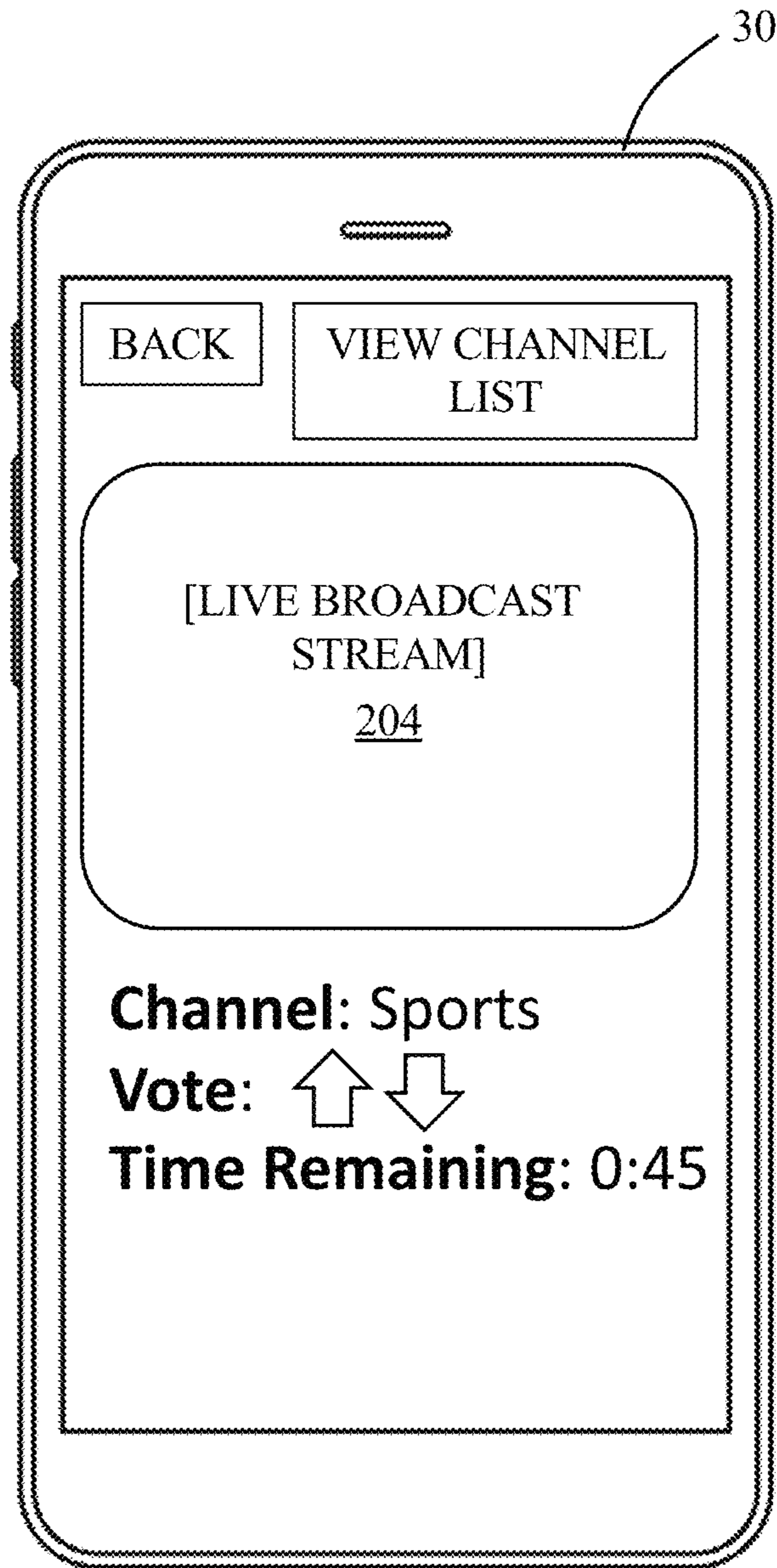


FIGURE 4C

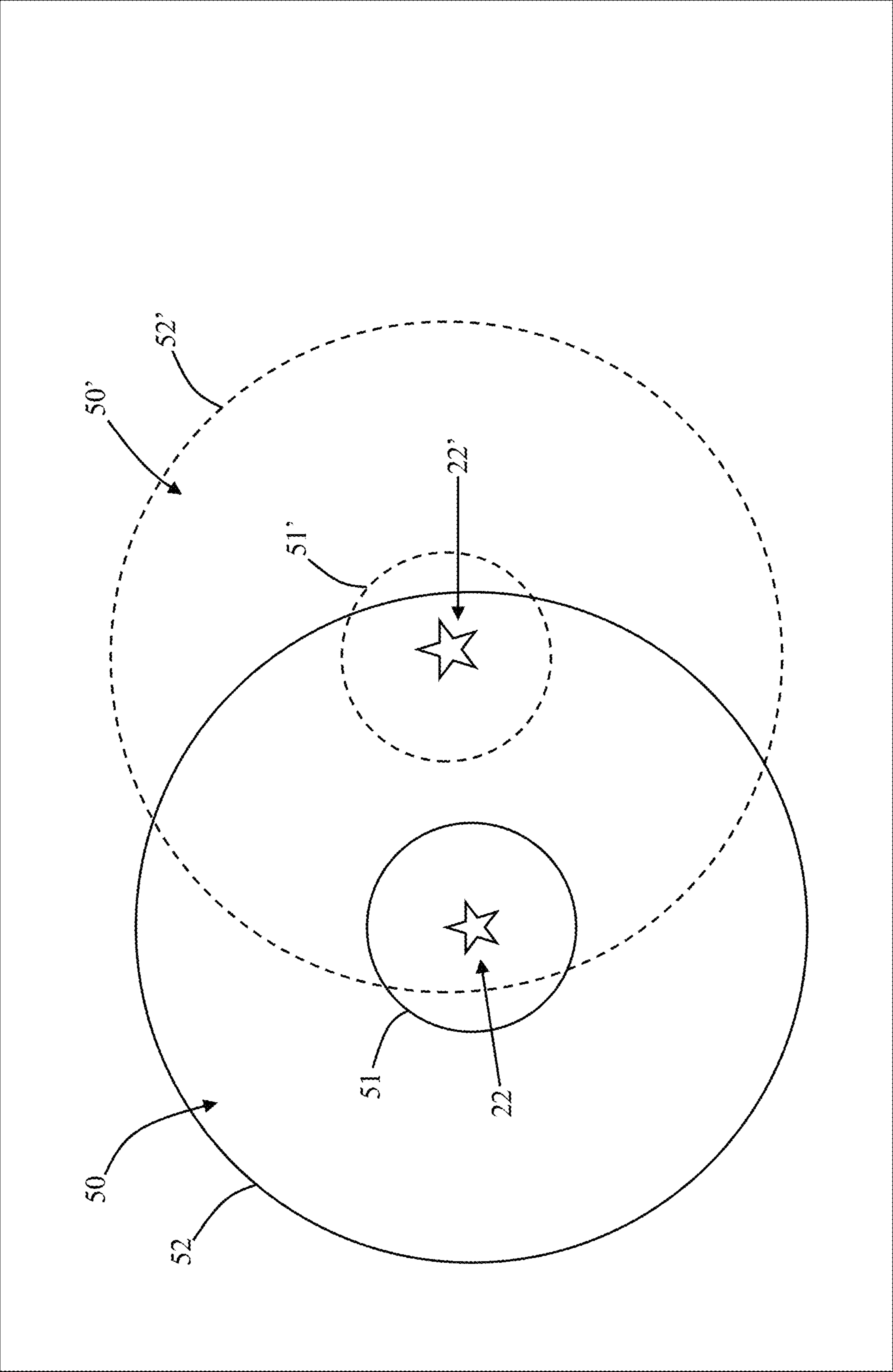


FIGURE 5

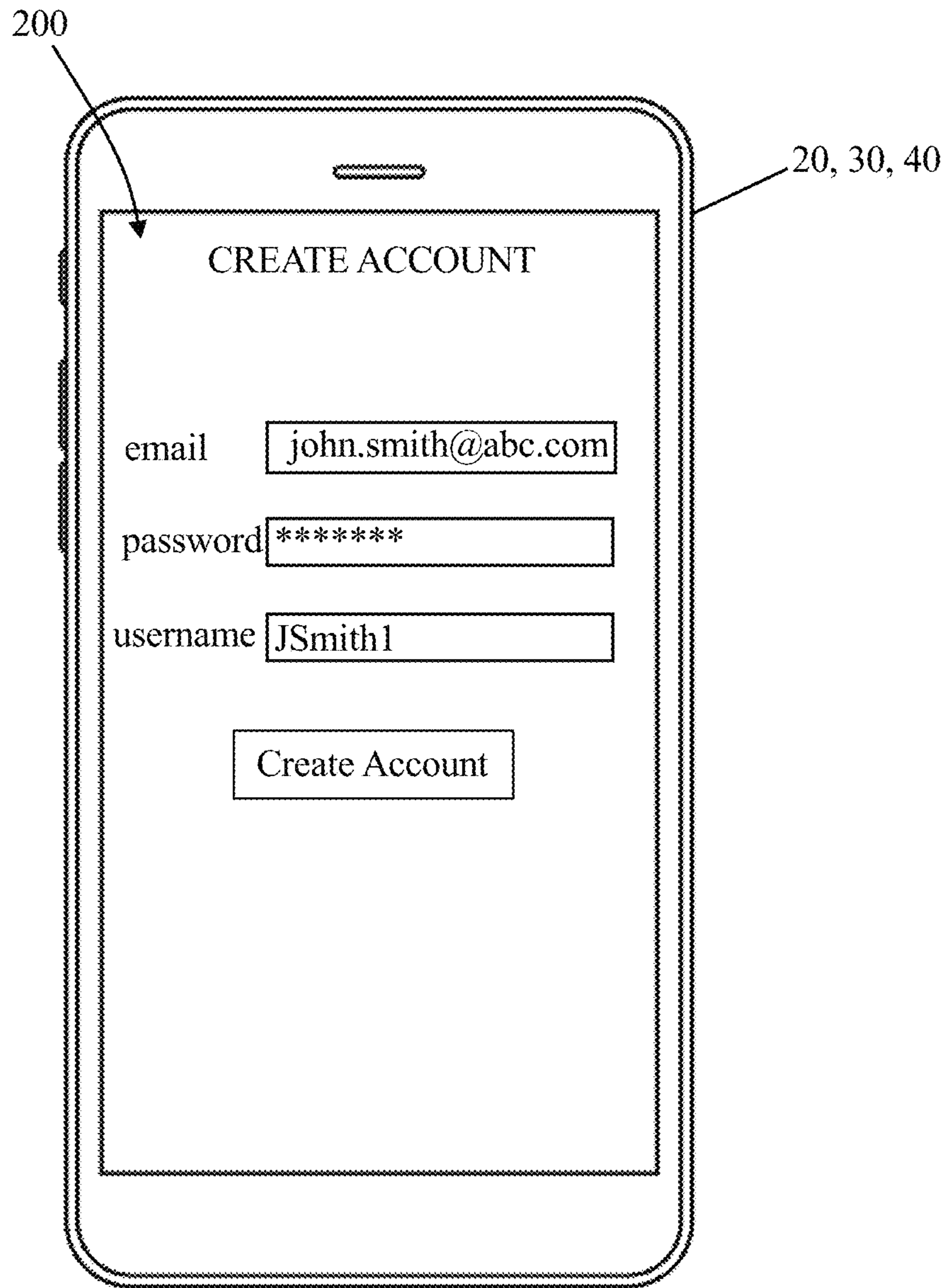


FIG. 6A

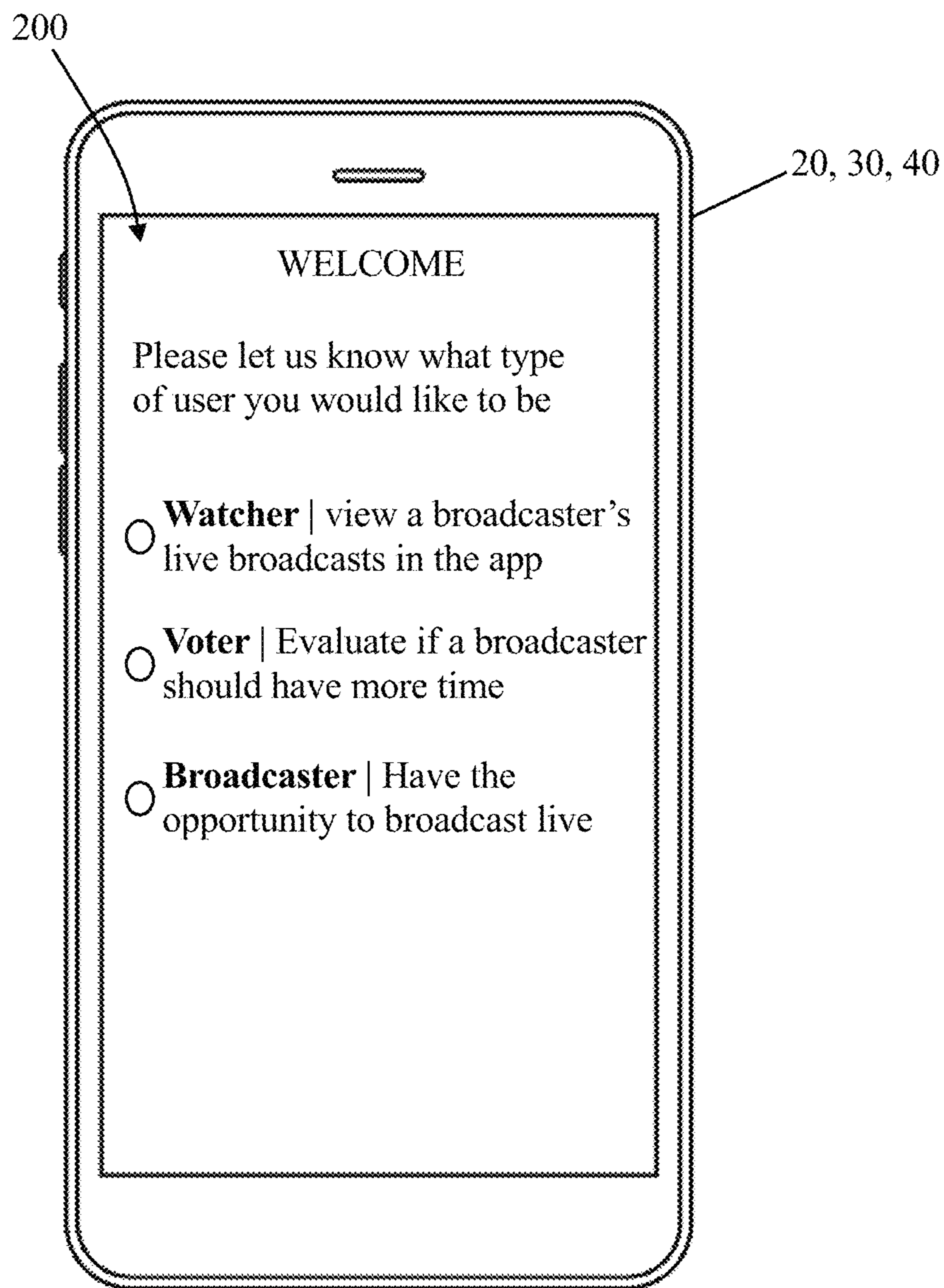


FIG. 6B

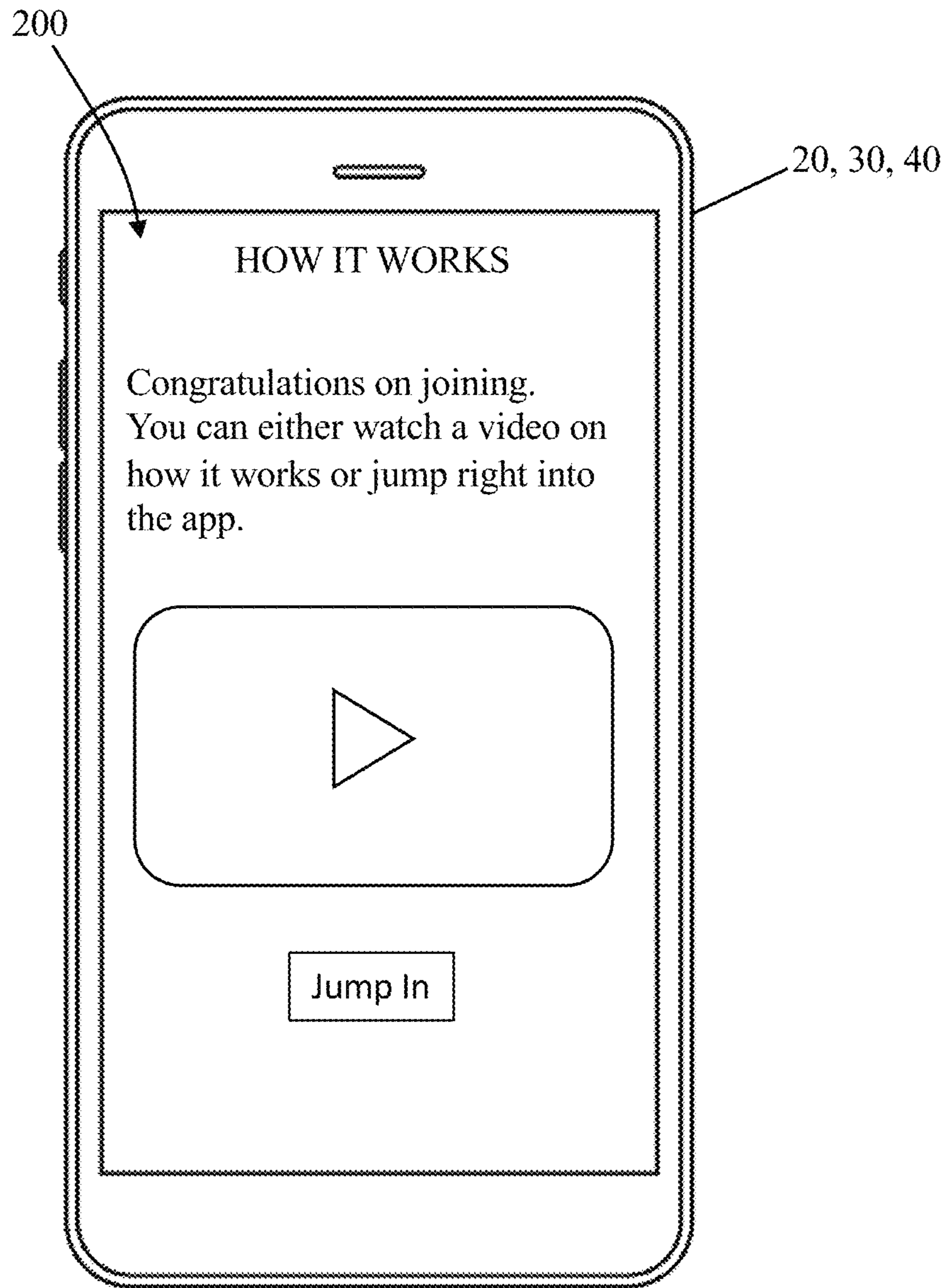


FIG. 6C

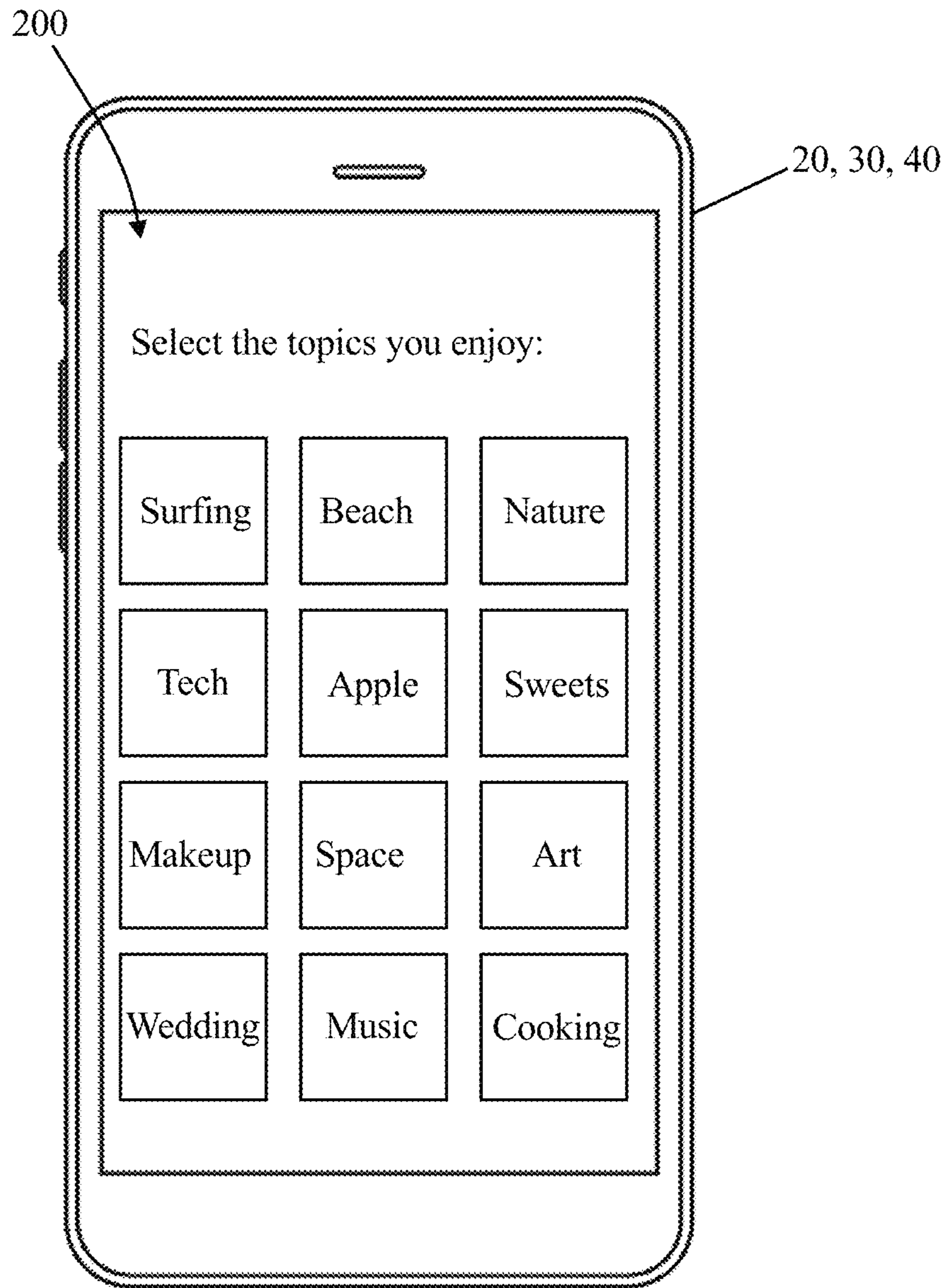


FIG. 6D

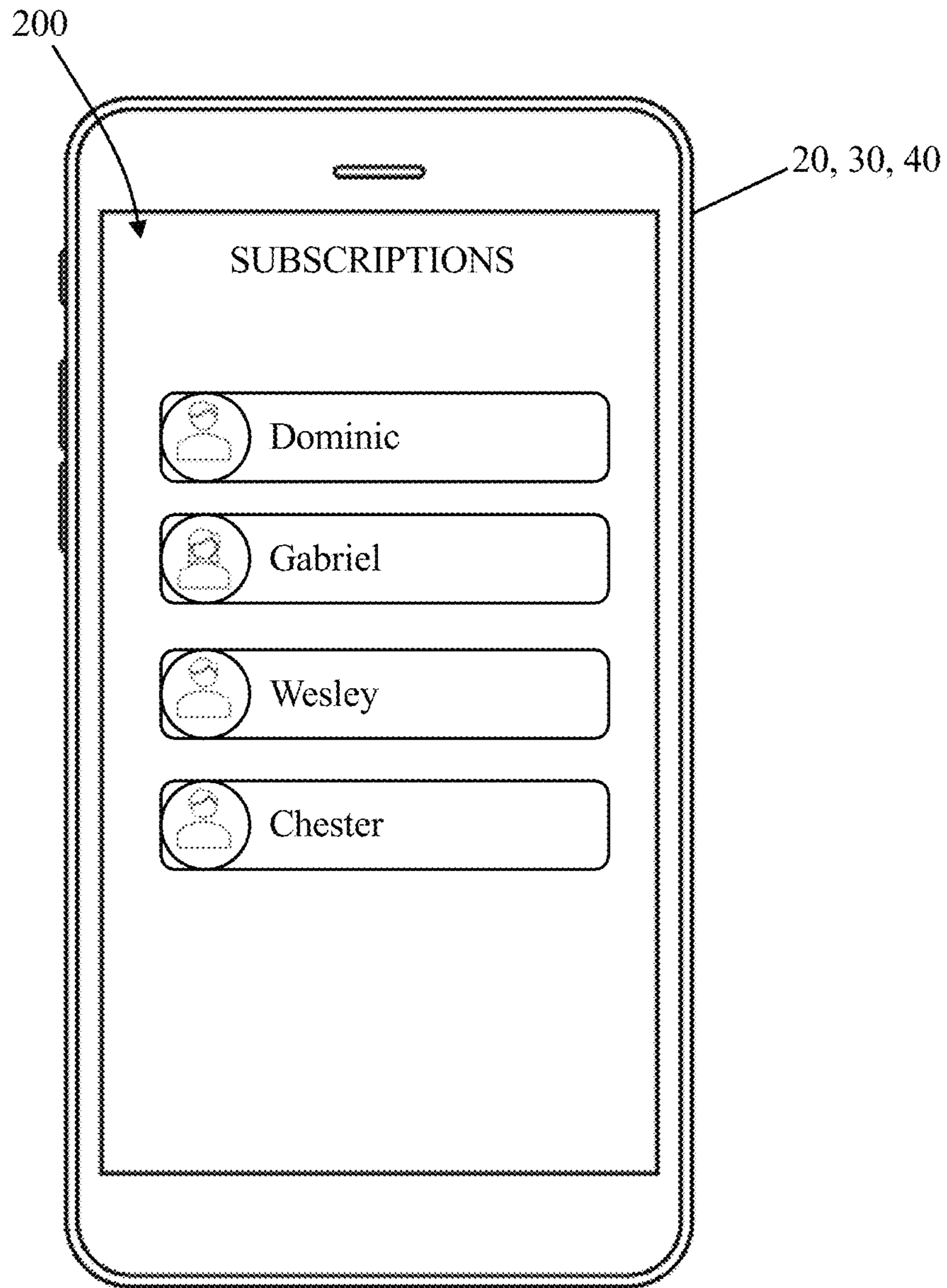


FIG. 6E

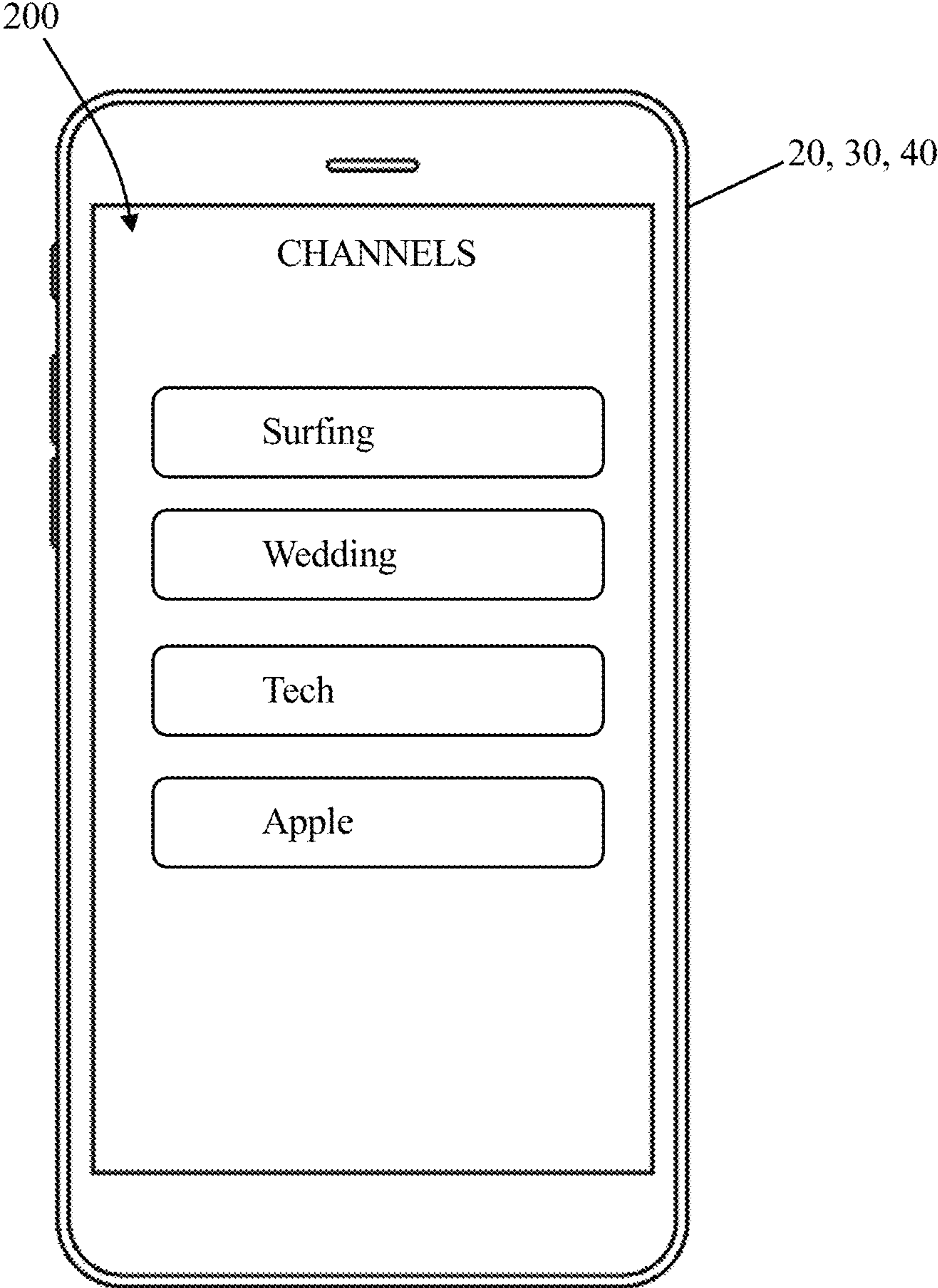


FIG. 6F

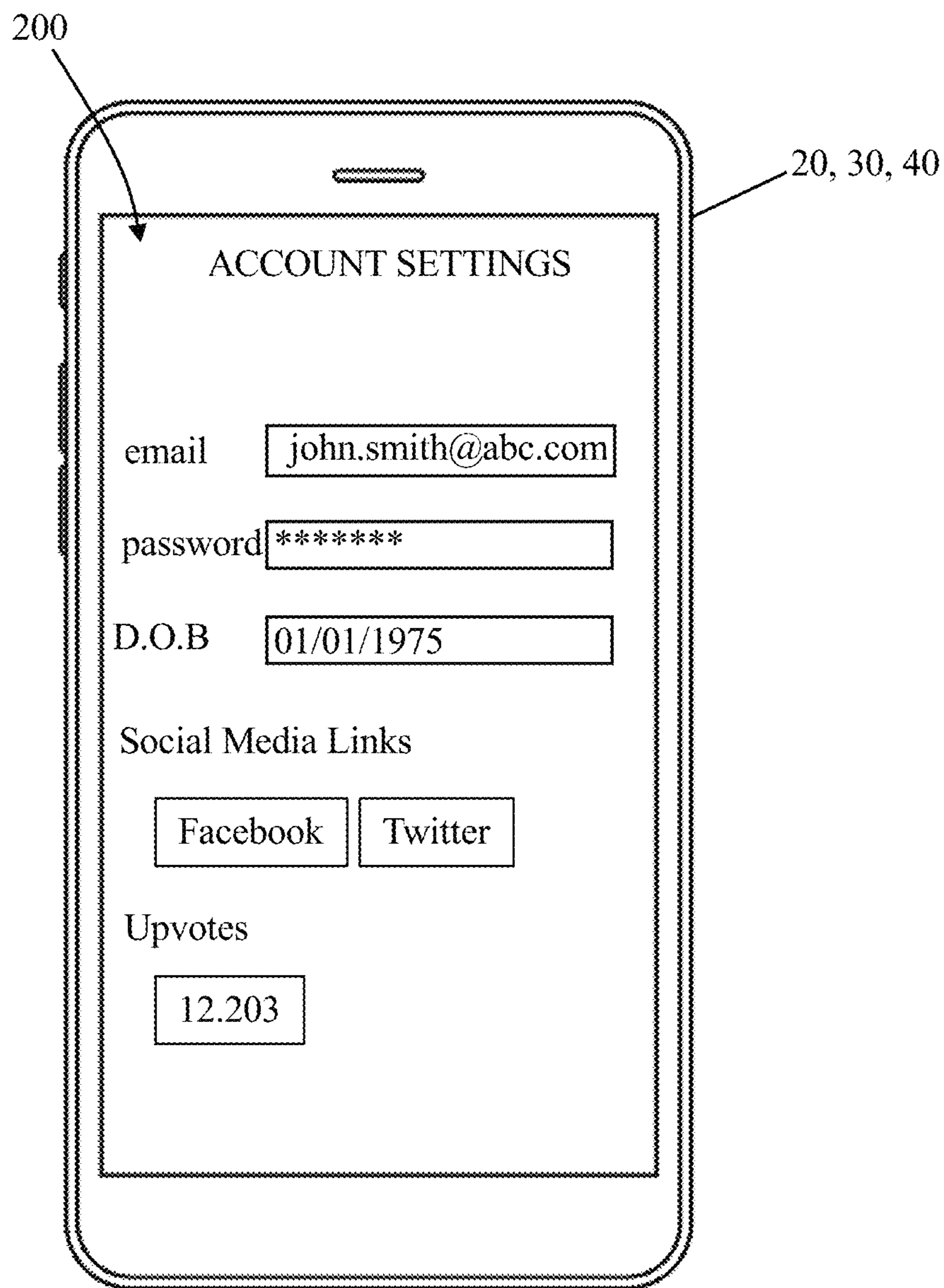


FIG. 6G

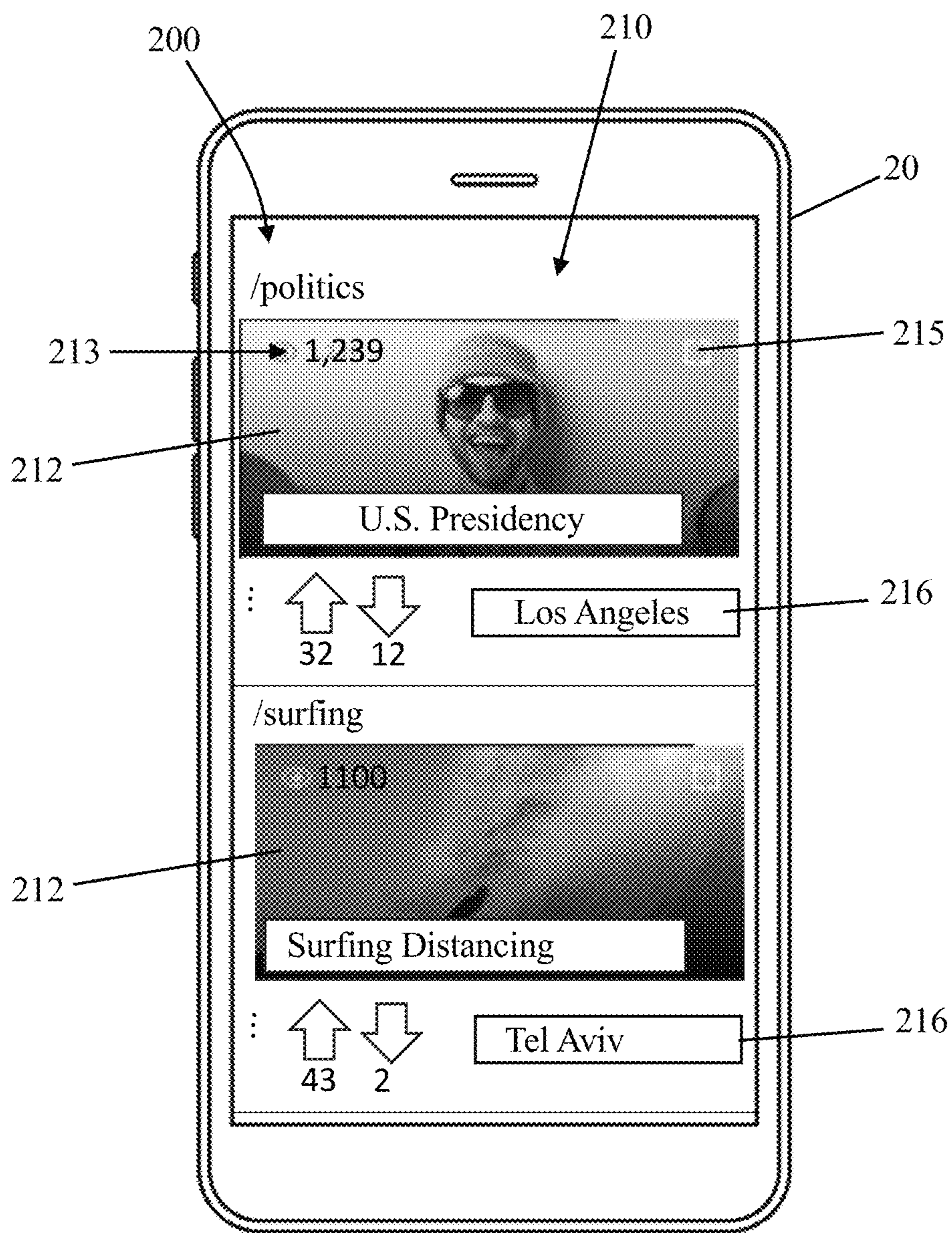


FIG. 6H

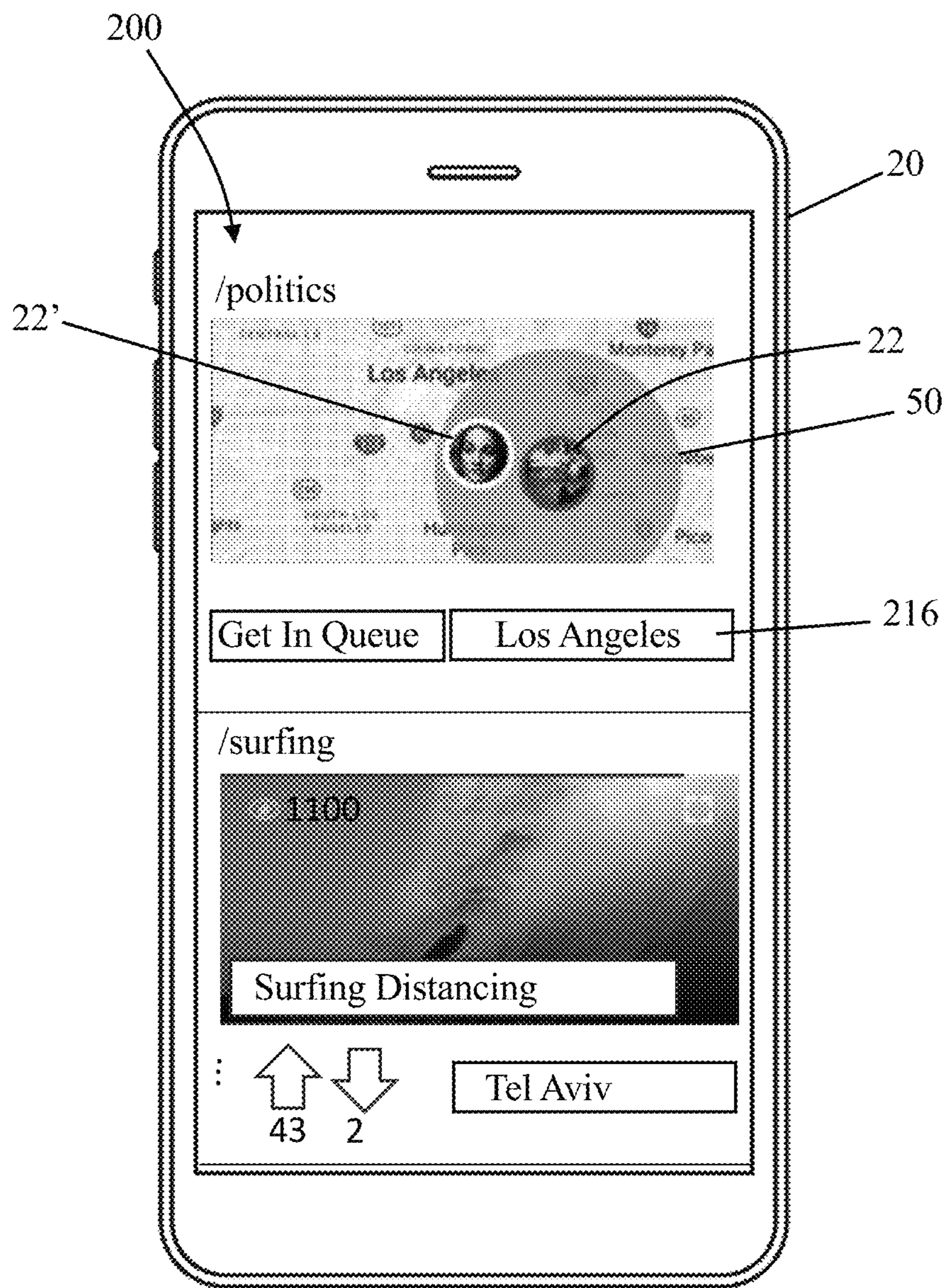


FIG. 6I

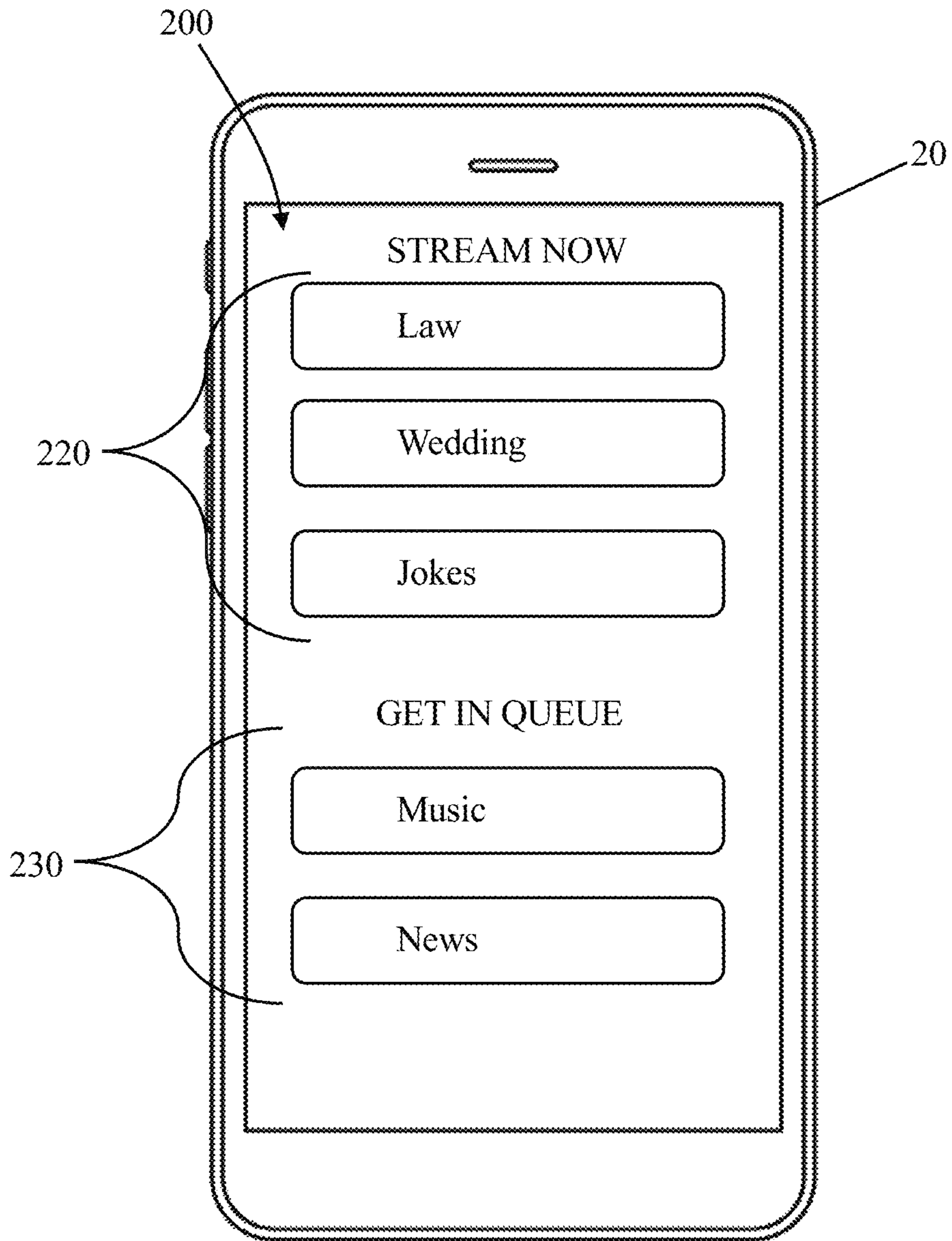


FIG. 6J

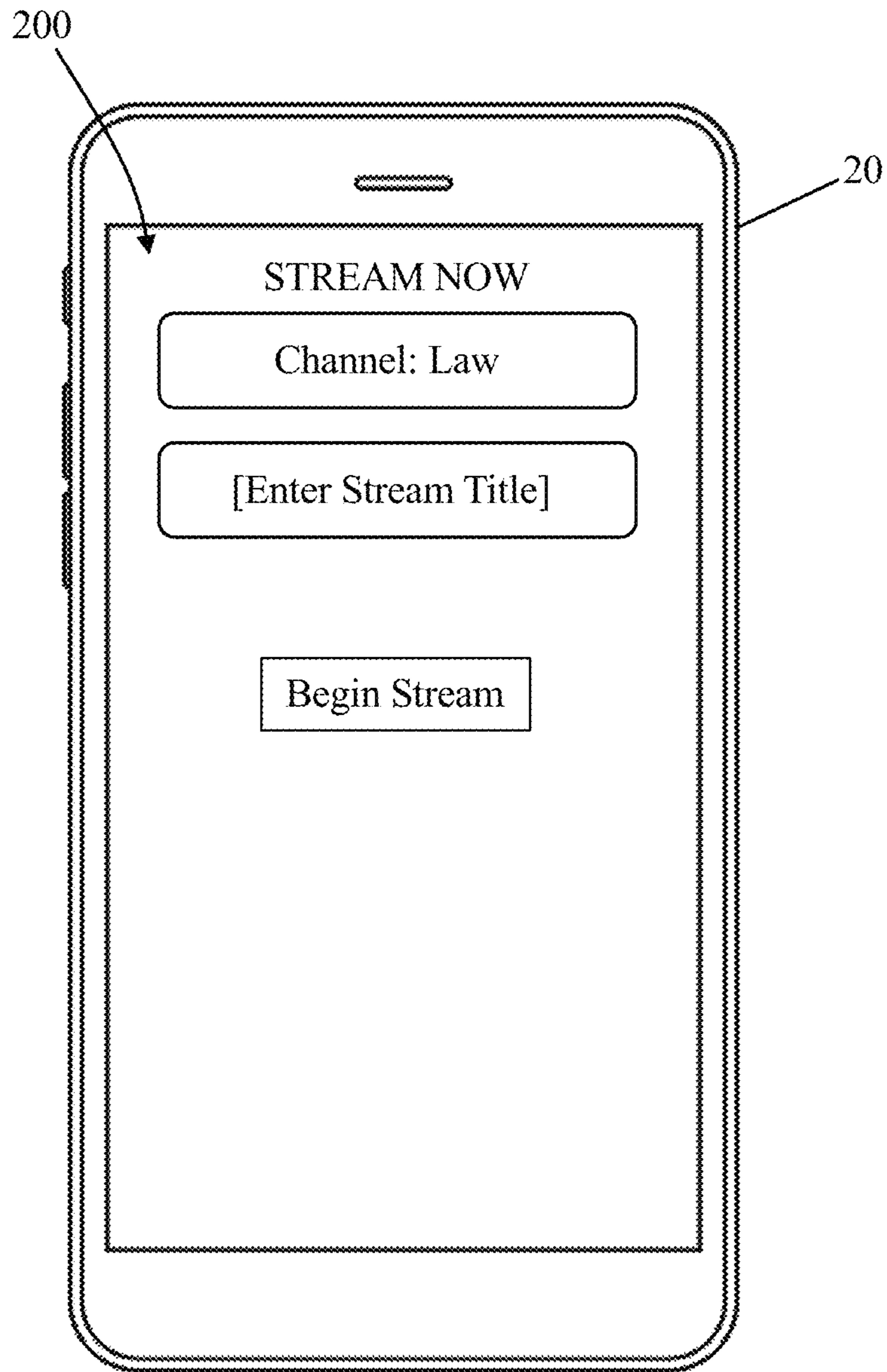


FIG. 6K

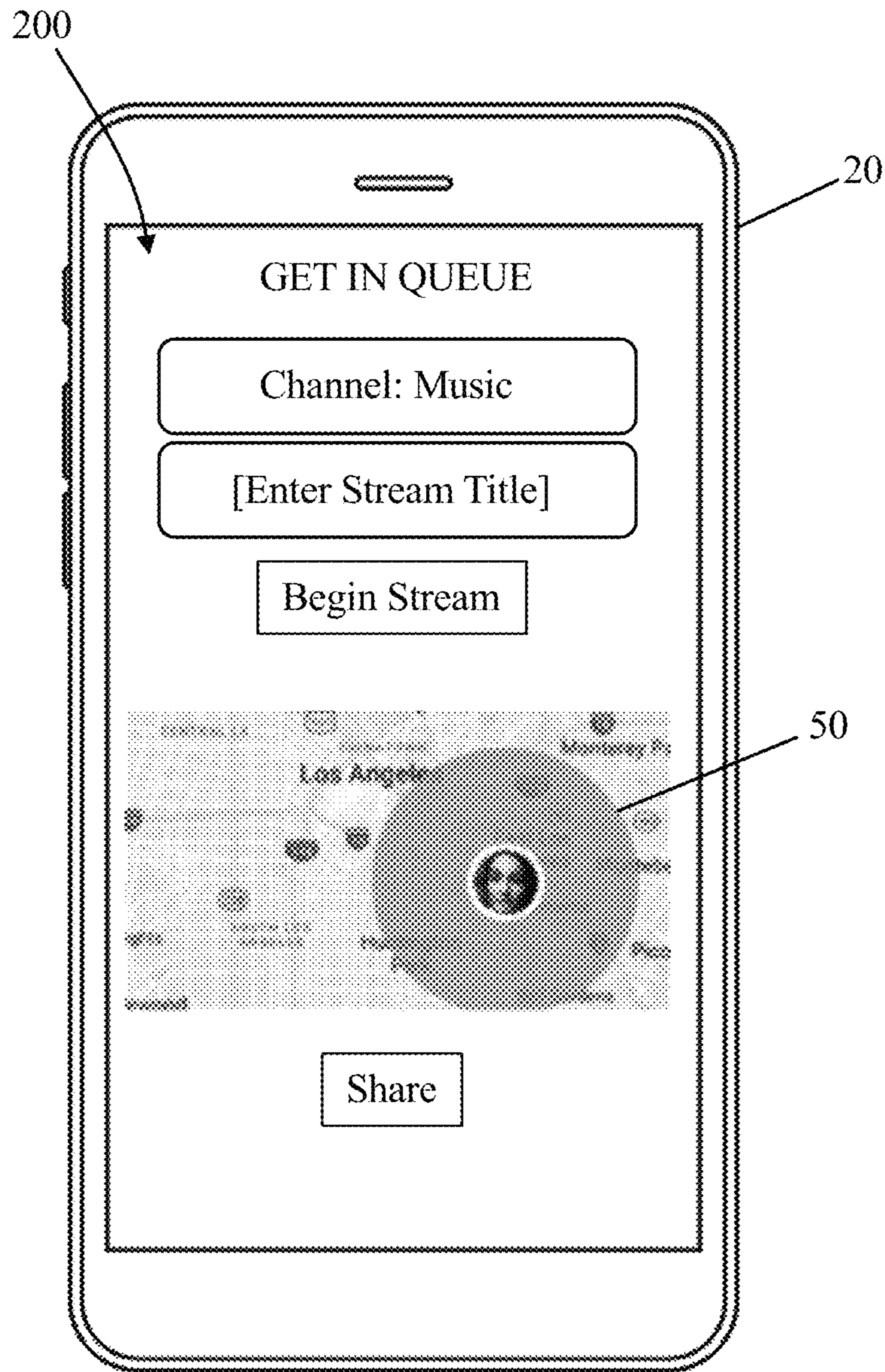


FIG. 6L

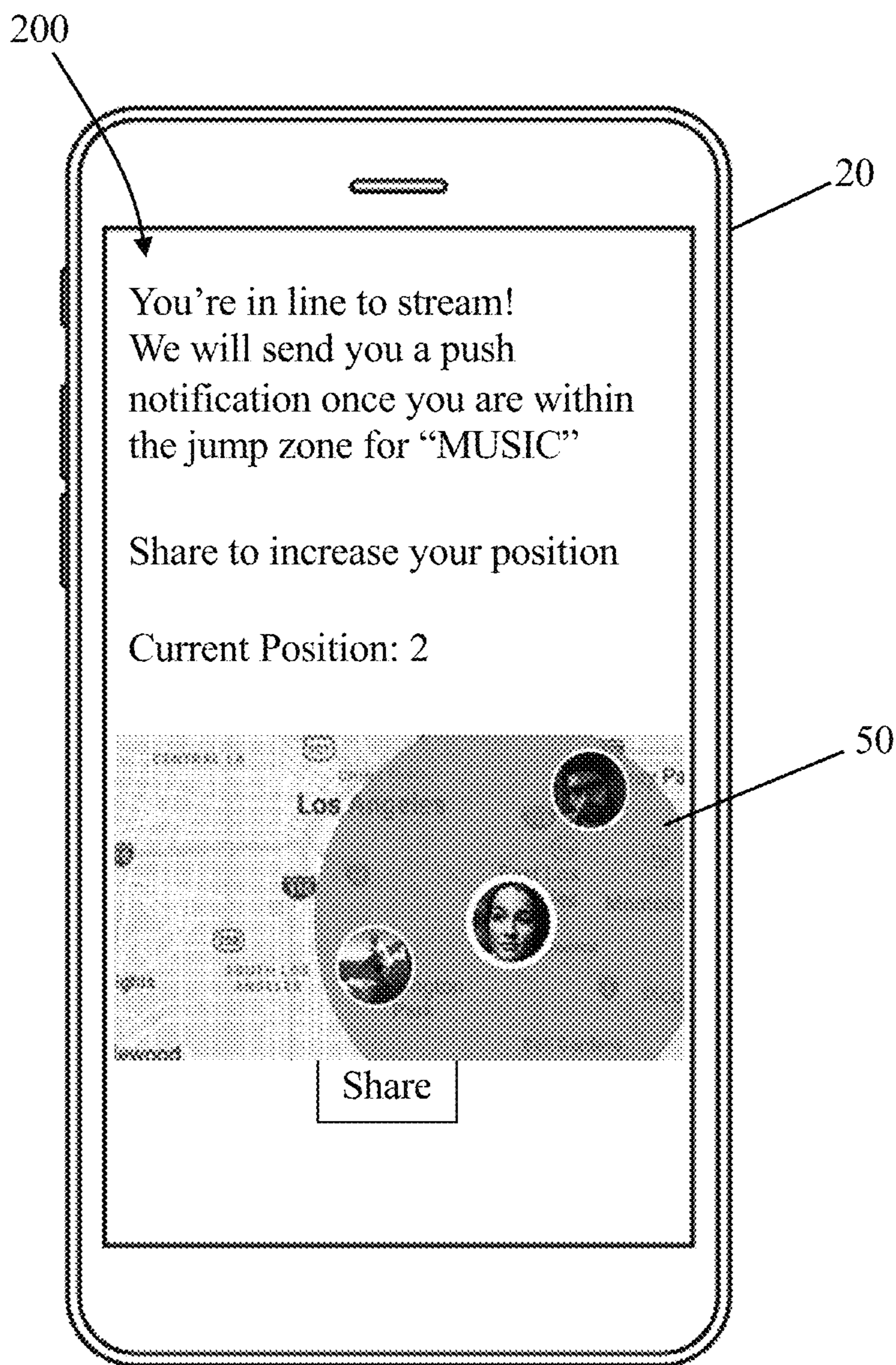


FIG. 6M

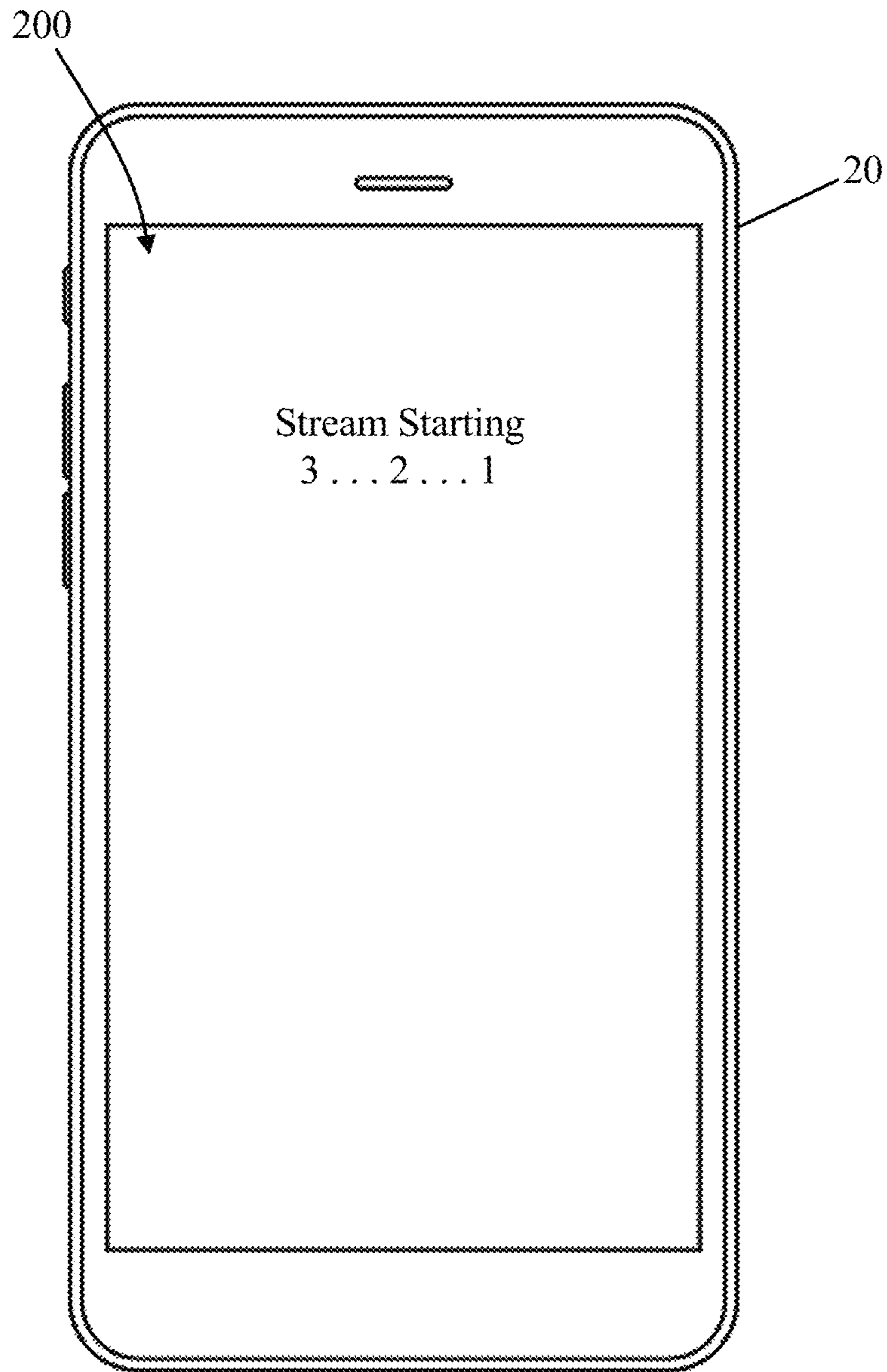


FIG. 6N

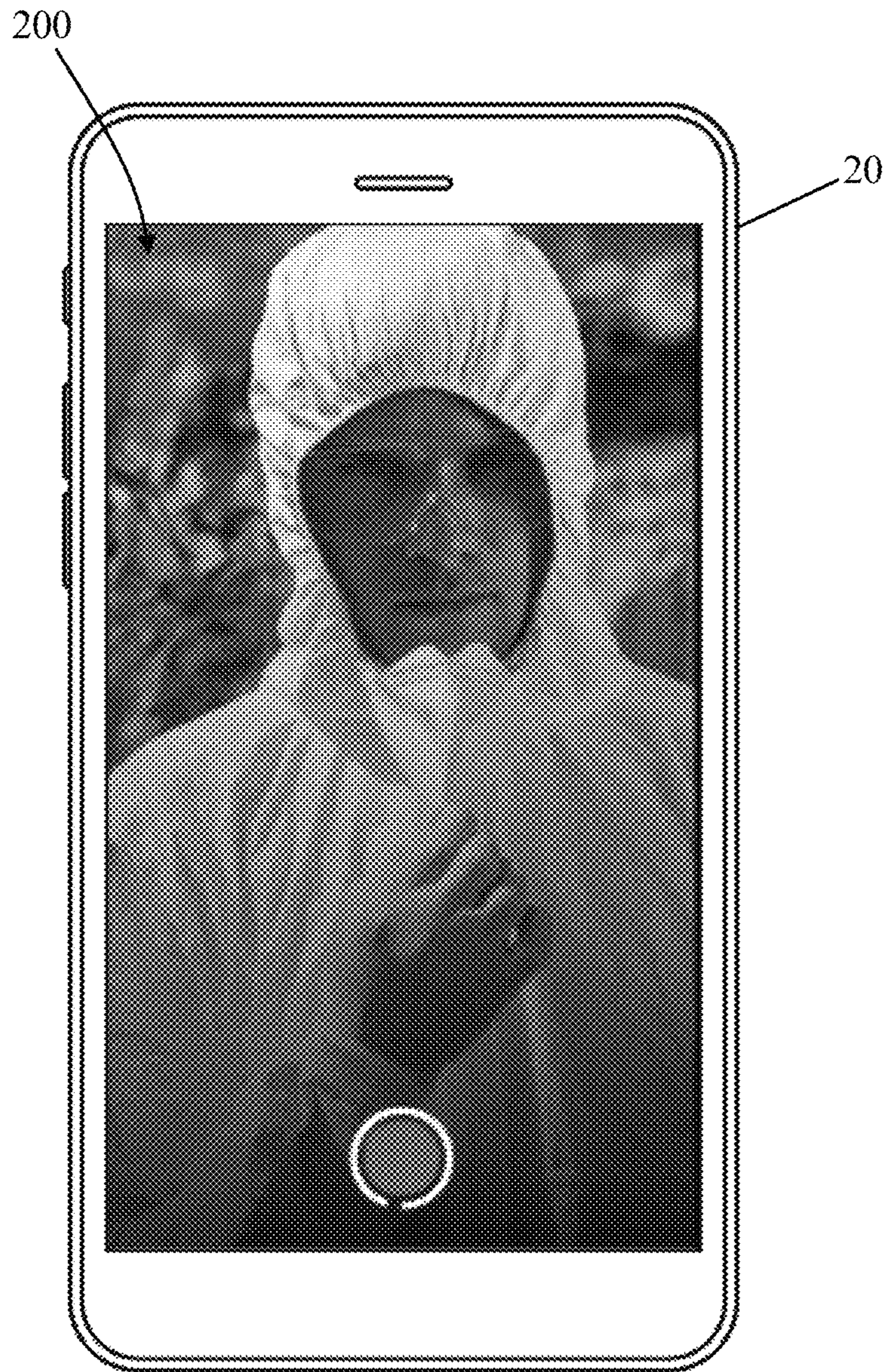


FIG. 60

LIVE CONTENT STREAMING SYSTEM AND METHOD

CLAIM OF PRIORITY/CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

The present application is a continuation-in-part patent application of previously-filed, currently pending U.S. patent application Ser. No. 16/524,707 filed on Jul. 29, 2019, which is a continuation patent application of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 15/183,305 filed on Jun. 15, 2016, now U.S. Pat. No. 10,368,134, which is based on and a claim to priority is made under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) to U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 62/181,508 filed on Jun. 18, 2015.

The contents of all prior applications, i.e., U.S. patent application Ser. Nos. 16/524,707, 15/183,305 and 62/181,508, are incorporated herein in their entirety by reference.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention is generally directed to a system and method for allowing content broadcasting users to compete for the opportunity to broadcast live media, such as live video and/or audio, to a specifically themed channel that is part of a larger collection of themed channels for a limited amount of time with the opportunity to be allotted additional broadcasting time based on live votes by voting or viewing users who are viewing and voting on the content and/or the broadcaster. In certain embodiments, a dynamic jump zone is determined, for example, based upon a geographic location of the current content broadcasting user in order to select the next content broadcasting user who is located within the determined jump zone.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Video conferencing and video communications are known, although they are largely used for business to business applications and/or personal one-on-one communications. There is a need for a video, audio and/or mobile streaming system and method that is largely social, competitive and entertaining.

For example, the proposed system and method would allow users to compete with one another for broadcasting time and, in some implementations, while broadcasting, attempt to receive positive votes or high ratings from viewers in order to continue the broadcast. Particularly, users may be able to accumulate points by participating in or completing tasks, such as by performing social shares, broadcasting media, completing surveys, filling out profile information, connecting a profile with external social networks, etc. Those users with the highest ranking or largest number of points have a better opportunity or chance to broadcast via the proposed system and method.

Some implementations may also include a dynamic or moving jump zone, which is a physical or geographic location within which the next broadcasting user must be located. Jump zones may be defined in a number of different ways, including being between a minimum and/or a maximum radial distance from the current broadcasting user, or being in a different state, country, university, college, stadium, etc.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention is generally directed to a system and method for providing one or more live broadcast feeds

on various themed channels, where users, e.g., broadcasting users, compete with one another to earn the ability to broadcast media. In particular, users of at least one embodiment of the system and method may be provided the opportunity to complete tasks within the system and method in order to obtain points or credits. In some cases, other users may vote for or assign points to queued users, e.g., users or user accounts who are waiting for the opportunity to broadcast media. Selection or determination of the next broadcaster, for example, within a themed channel, may be at least partially determined based upon the user's points, credits or ranking within the system and method.

In some embodiments, another factor used to determine or select a user to broadcast media via the system and method may include defining a jump zone. For example, the jump zone may be used to define a physical zone, area, region, etc. within which the next broadcaster must be located. In some cases, the next broadcaster will be selected or determined as being the highest ranking user (or highest ranking user who is queued to broadcast or who has otherwise indicated a desire to broadcast at that moment) within the jump zone.

For example, the jump zone may be defined as a radial (or other) distance from the current broadcasting user (e.g., between a minimum and a maximum radial distance). Other embodiments or channels may define the jump zone as being a next or different state, country, region, university, college, stadium, arena, etc. This creates a dynamic and moving zone within which the next broadcaster must be located.

Accordingly, the broadcasters may complete tasks and other opportunities to increase his or her rank within the system and method and hope to outrank other broadcasting users located within the jump zone for the opportunity to broadcast media. If the broadcasting user wins the opportunity to broadcast media, then he or she is assigned a specific (often predetermined) amount of time (e.g., one or two minutes) to broadcast live on a particular themed (or other) channel. During the allotted or initial amount of time, voting users can submit votes attributed to the broadcast—positive votes may result in additional time (e.g., one or two minutes) allotted to the current broadcast, whereas negative votes may result in premature or immediate termination of the current broadcast. Other users may include watching users, or passive viewers who are able to view the broadcasts but do not provide any votes or broadcast themselves.

These and other objects, features and advantages of the present invention will become more apparent when the drawings as well as the detailed description are taken into consideration.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a schematic representation of the system as disclosed in accordance with at least one embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 2 is a block diagram of the broadcasting management system of at least one embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 3 is a flow chart illustrating the method of at least one embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 4A is a schematic representation of a broadcasting or content providing device streaming a broadcast through the broadcast management system of at least one embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 4B is an exemplary screenshot illustrating an exemplary channel list of a plurality of themed channels in accordance with at least one embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 4C is an exemplary screenshot of a voting device illustrating the live broadcast stream in accordance with at least one embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 5 is an exemplary schematic representation of the system illustrating overlapping jump zones as disclosed herein.

FIG. 6A through 6O are exemplary screenshots of the mobile application for assisting with the implementation of at least one embodiment of the system and method disclosed herein.

Like reference numerals refer to like parts throughout the several views of the drawings provided herein.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

As shown in the accompanying drawings, and with particular reference to FIGS. 1 and 3, the present invention is generally directed to a system 10 and method 100 for providing a live content stream or broadcast, for example, from one or more content broadcasting or content providing devices 20 to one or more content viewing devices 30, 40. Particularly, in at least one embodiment of the system 10 and/or method 100, broadcasting users 22 will compete with one another for the opportunity to broadcast or stream media from his or her device 20 and to one or more viewing devices 30, 40 or viewing users 32, 42. For instance, the system 10 and/or method 100 of some embodiments will select or determine which broadcasters, accounts or users 22 may stream or broadcast media based upon the location of the user(s) 22 and/or based upon a determined rank or number of points within the system 10 or method 100 that each user 22 has accumulated.

More in particular, a jump zone 50 may be calculated or determined by the system 10 or method 100, for example, based upon a location of the current broadcasting user 22 or device, and predetermined jump zone criteria, including, but not limited to a minimum and maximum distance. Other users 22 who may be located within the jump zone 50 may elect to broadcast content from his or her device 20, however, the system 10 and/or method 100 of one embodiment will only select one user (or other predetermined number of users) from within the jump zone 50 to broadcast media next (e.g., once the current broadcast has terminated or ended) for each of a number of different channels. In addition to the location of the potential next broadcaster, that selection may be based upon a number of points the user(s) has accumulated and/or a ranking associated with the user from within or by the system 10 or method 100.

With reference to FIG. 1, the system 10 of at least one embodiment of the present invention includes a broadcast management system 60 interconnected with or communicative with one or more communication, computer or data networks 15. Also as shown in FIG. 1, the system 10 may include one or more content providing devices 20 and one or more content viewing devices, such as a voting device 30 and/or a passive watching device 40, disposed in a communicative relation with the network 15. The broadcast management system 60 may communicate with the various devices 20, 30, 40, for instance, via network(s) 15, in order to implement the various embodiments of the present invention in the intended manner, as described herein. It should also be noted that some embodiments may include an administrative profile or admin user interconnected to the broadcast management system 60, either directly or remotely. In addition to other tasks and roles, the admin user may have permissions to set up, define, change, modify, add

or delete various parameters for the one or more broadcasting channels, as provided herein.

Moreover, the computer, communication or data network(s) 15, as used herein, may include virtually any local, remote or wide range communication network or collection of networks capable of facilitating the practice of the present invention in the intended manner, such as the World Wide Web or Internet, telecommunication networks such as 3G, 4G, 5G, LTE, etc., Intranet, Wide Area Networks, Bluetooth, Near-field Communication (NFC) networks, etc., or any combination thereof. Particularly, the network(s) 15 can include any known networks for facilitating communication of media such as audio, video and/or data communications such as, for example, a cellular network, local area network (LAN), the internet, VOIP, or SMS service, etc.

Still referring to the schematic of FIG. 1, the broadcast management system 60 of at least one embodiment of the present invention may include any one or more computer systems structured to store, communicate and/or process data and/or media, including, for example, profile information corresponding to one or more users 22, 32, 42, provide or manage media broadcasting or streaming, for example, from one device 20 to another one or more devices 30, 40, etc.

For instance, as provided in the block diagram of FIG. 2, the broadcast management system 60 may include a computer processor 61, data storage device 62, memory 63, and one or more communication devices or hardware 64 (e.g., network device(s), web server(s), etc.) Particularly, the broadcast management system 60 of at least one embodiment of the present invention may comprise one or more web servers or data servers, including software and hardware structured to receive information and data, and to communicate data, information, media, web pages, applications, etc. via the network 15 in accordance with the present invention.

More in particular, the computer processor 61 may include, for example, any device cooperatively structured to execute or implement computer instructions, software, etc., including the method 100 as disclosed in accordance with at least one embodiment of the present invention. The data storage device 62, as used herein, may include one or more internal, external or removable hard disk drives, CD/DVD, USB drives, solid state drives, virtual drives, cloud-based storage drives, or other types of volatile or non-volatile memory, and may include any one or more databases or other like data structures configured to store and retrieve data, media, and other information in accordance with the various embodiments of the present invention. Further, the memory device 63, as used herein, may include but is not limited to random access memory (RAM) or other like devices configured to implement the present invention in the intended manner, for example, by at least temporary storing and assisting with the execution of one or more applications or computer programs capable of implementing the system 10 and methods 100 described herein. Moreover, the communication device 64 may include a network communication hardware/software component structured to facilitate communication between the broadcast management system 60 and/or other devices 20, 30, 40 provided herein.

Furthermore, the user devices, such as the content providing device(s) 22 and/or the content viewing device(s) including the voting device(s) 32 and/or passive watching device(s) 42 of the various embodiments of the present invention may include virtually any computer based system, such as, but not limited to a desktop computer, laptop

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computer, mobile computer, tablet, cellular or mobile phone, smart phone, media device, game device, PDA, etc. capable of performing the tasks associated with each device, such as capturing or broadcasting media, displaying media, communicating with the network(s) **15** and/or broadcasting management system **60**, etc. The broadcasting device(S) **20** may thus include a camera, microphone, or other video and/or audio capturing devices.

Particularly, in some embodiments, a user may first download, install or otherwise access an application (e.g., a mobile application) or website via his or her device corresponding to the system **10** and method **100** of the present invention. For instance, the user may navigate an application store or database (e.g., Apple App Store, or Google Play Store) in order to select, download, install or access an application corresponding to the present invention. In some embodiments, the user may begin by electing to either become a content broadcasting user **22**, a voting user **32** and/or a watcher **42**. Particularly, in some embodiments, the user will be prompted to create an account or user profile that may contain, among other items, the user's name, email address, or other contact information, username, password, etc. Other profile information may include various text, data, images, pictures, links, etc. that the user may find interesting or that the user may think other users will find interesting. Adding content to a user profile in some instances may be rewarded with points or an increased ranking, which, as described herein, may be used by the system **10** and/or method **100** to determine or select the next broadcaster.

In addition, the user(s) may elect to link one or more external social networking profiles (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.) to his or her user profile. For instance, as described herein, the opportunity to broadcast media or content via the system **10** and method **100** of some embodiments is based upon a competitive point system. Linking social network accounts to a user profile of the present invention may be a way to earn points and/or increase a user ranking. It should also be noted that the broadcaster **22** may include his or her own profile page, for example, host by or maintained by the system **10** of the present invention. This profile page can include certain profile information, such as username, location, comments, etc. Other users of the system **10** and method **100** can follow profile page(s) of other users, providing an easy way to keep track of favorites and/or in order to be notified (e.g., by email or through the system **10** and method **100**) when a followed user is broadcasting.

Referring now to the high level flow chart of FIG. **3**, the method **100** includes broadcasting live media from a content providing device, as shown at **102**, for example, via a broadcasting module **65**. It should be noted that some embodiments of the present invention may include a plurality of different channels or stations, for example, each with a different or predetermined theme or topic. At any given time, within each channel, there may be a different media broadcast, for example, from different content providing devices **20**. Accordingly, the system **10** and method **100** may provide live broadcasting from a plurality of different content providing devices **20** within a plurality of different channels or themed broadcasting channels. Particularly, when a content providing user **22** decides to broadcast media, he or she may first select a channel or themed broadcasting channel within which to broadcast. Similarly, when a content viewing user **32**, **42** decides to receive or view a live broadcast, he or she may select a themed broadcasting channel, for example, from a list or other display.

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Particularly, for exemplary purposes only, in some embodiments, the channels or themes associated with the channels may include, but are in no way limited to: extreme sports, sports, comedy, cooking, live music, freestyle rap, dance, poetry, economics, politics, faith/religion, animals, pranks, video games, video game tricks, how-to, makeup/hair/fashion, consumer buyer advice, health and fitness, voice over, magic, addiction (people recovering from alcohol and drug addiction), rated "R", college, World, travel, courageous, selling, etc. Other potential channels may include, but are in no way limited to national events (e.g., college football game day), world events (e.g., holidays), internal events (e.g., Coachella).

In any event, as schematically shown in FIG. **4A**, for example, the content broadcasting user **22** will utilize his or her cell phone, computer, web camera, or other content broadcasting device **20** in order to capture and stream live media. Live media, as used herein, can include, but is not limited to live, real-time or substantially real-time video, audio, still or moving images, animation, virtual reality, augmented reality or the like. In some embodiments, the live stream or broadcast will be communicated to the broadcast management system **60**, for example, via network(s) **15**, where other users, such as voting user **32**, watching users **42** or other broadcasting users **22** may select and view the broadcast.

Furthermore, some embodiments of the system **10** and/or method **100** of the present invention limit each broadcast to an amount of time, such that, when the time expires, the next broadcaster or user is able to broadcast live on the corresponding channel, for example, as determined via a next broadcaster selection module and/or a jump zone module discussed herein. For instance, as shown at **103** in FIG. **3**, the method **100** includes setting an initial broadcasting time. It should be noted that the allotted or initial time may be different for different channels, different regions, different users, etc., and in some embodiments may be extended, for example, based upon received votes, as provided herein.

In addition, with reference to FIG. **4B**, in one embodiment, the content viewing users **32**, **42**, using their respective device(s) **30**, **40**, are able to view a list of channels **202**, such as themed channels upon which live content may be broadcasted or streamed. Selecting a channel from the list **202** or other channel display will cause the corresponding device **30**, **40** to receive and display a corresponding broadcast or media stream, including, for example, an audio and/or content stream **204**, as shown, for example, in FIG. **4C**. While viewing the content stream or broadcast **204**, voting users **32** may be able to submit votes or rate the current broadcast.

Particularly, the system **10** and method **100** further includes receiving and tracking votes attributed to a broadcast or media stream, as represented in the flow chart of FIG. **3** at **104**, via a voting module **66**, which may include any combination of hardware and/or software configured to receive, track and attribute votes in accordance with at least one embodiment of the present invention. For example, referring back to FIG. **4C**, users, and in particular voting users, may submit one or more votes attributed to the currently displayed or corresponding media broadcast, for example, by selecting an up arrow, down arrow, rating (e.g., on a numerical or graphical scale), etc. Upon submission of a vote, the broadcast management system **60** will receive the vote(s) and track the vote(s), via the voting module **66**. The votes, in some embodiments, may be divided or tracked as 'positive' and/or 'negative' votes. For example, an up arrow (or its equivalent) may be characterized in some embodi-

ments as a 'positive' vote, meaning, for example, the voting user **32** enjoyed or enjoys the broadcast. On the other hand, a down arrow (or its equivalent) may be characterized in some embodiments as a 'negative' vote, meaning, for example, the voting user **32** did not enjoy the broadcast.

Votes are received, collected and tallied during the corresponding broadcast, and in some instances may be displayed to the users, such as the content providing user **22**, the voting user(s) **32**, and/or the watching user(s) **42**. In some embodiments, the time allotted for the particular broadcast or media stream may be extended in the event the broadcast is attributed a predetermined number of positive votes, for instance, during the broadcast. In such a case, additional broadcasting time may be added to the broadcast, allowing the broadcast to continue beyond the initial broadcast time.

In some embodiments, additional broadcasting time may be added to the broadcast when a certain number or percentage of viewers have submitting a positive vote. For example, in at least one embodiment, if fifty percent or if more than fifty percent of the viewers or voting users submit a positive vote to a particular broadcast during the live broadcast, then the system or method may add additional time to the broadcast. More specifically, in some cases, if more than fifty percent of the viewers submit a positive vote for a particular broadcast, then the broadcast time will be extended a predetermined amount of time, such as, for example, an amount of time equal to (or greater than or less than) the initial broadcast time. For example, the initial broadcast time may be two minutes. If, during those two minutes, six out of ten viewers submit a positive vote (such as an upvote, thumbs up, plus vote, etc.), the broadcast time will be extended by an additional two minutes. Other amounts of additional time are contemplated with other embodiments.

As another example, a user broadcasting on a 'Sports' channel may be provided an initial broadcasting time of one minute or 60 seconds. During that time, for example, while the user **22** is broadcasting live on the Sports channel via his or her device, voting users **32**, using a voting device **30**, may view the live broadcast **204** and submit one or more votes. In an exemplary embodiment, the system **10** and/or method **100** may be configured such that every ten (10) positive votes will result in an additional broadcasting time in the amount of 10 seconds. Of course these numbers are provided for illustrative purposes only and should not be deemed limiting in any manner. In such a case, if the system **10** and/or method **100** receives (10) positive votes attributed to the corresponding broadcast, during the initial allotted time, then an additional ten seconds will be added to the broadcasting time. Otherwise, the broadcast will terminate or stop at the end of the timer.

Some embodiments (or some channels) may allow the time to be extended a predetermined number of times only (e.g., once, twice, etc.), although other embodiments (or other channels) may allow the time to be extended an indefinite number of times, so long as positive votes continue to be provided and attributed to the broadcast.

In any event, a broadcast may be terminated or stopped by the system **10** or method **100** upon the expiration of broadcasting time, e.g., either the initially allotted time, or the initially allotted time plus any additional time provided due to the collection of positive votes via the voting module **66**. Particularly, referring back to the flow chart of FIG. **3**, during the broadcast, the method **100** will determine whether additional time is warranted, as shown at **105**. For example, as described above, additional time may be war-

ranted upon the receipt of a predetermined number of positive votes during the broadcast. If additional time is added, some embodiments may continue to collect votes, for example, in order to determine is even more additional time is warranted. Once the broadcasting time has expired, as shown at **107**, the broadcast is stopped or terminated **106**.

Some embodiments of the system **10** and/or method **100** of the present invention may provide an additional mechanism upon which the broadcast may be terminated or stopped **106**, for example, prior to the expiration of time. In particular, in at least one embodiment, the collection of or receipt of a predetermined number or percentage of 'negative' votes attributed to a broadcast can be used to immediately terminate or stop the broadcast. For example, with reference to **109** in FIG. **3**, a 'kill switch' may be implemented such that when a broadcast is attributed a predetermined number or percentage of negative votes, the system **10** and/or method **100** may immediately terminate or stop the broadcast **106**. For example, the system **10** or method **100** may include a predetermined number (e.g., 10, 50, 100) of negative votes that when received and attributed to a broadcast, will serve to immediately terminate the broadcast. Other embodiments may implement a 'kill switch' based upon a percentage of negative votes as compared to positive votes, or a percentage of negative votes as compared to the number of viewing users currently viewing the broadcast, as an example. For instance, one illustrative and non-limiting example, if approximately or exactly 80% of the votes received are negative votes, then the broadcast may be immediately or thereafter terminated. It should be noted that the number, amount or percentage of negative votes required to terminate a broadcast prior to the expiration of time (e.g., via the 'kill switch') may be different for different channels, users, regions, days, etc.

Further features of certain embodiments of the present invention include selecting or determining the next broadcasting user **22**, for example, upon the expiration or termination of the current broadcast. For instance, in some embodiments, and in some instances, there is a continuous or near continuous stream of media or broadcast in a single channel such that when one broadcast ends (either via expiration of time or termination via the 'kill switch'), another broadcast will begin, generally from a different user, via different content providing device **20** and from a different physical or geographic location.

Selection or determination of the next broadcasting user **22** or device **20** may include a jump zone module **67** (as provided by reference character **108** in FIG. **3**) and/or a next broadcaster selection module **68** (as provided by reference character **110** in FIG. **3**). Particularly, the jump zone module **67** of at least one embodiment of the present invention comprises one or more hardware and/or software components that are structured to determine or define an area, region, or physical zone, e.g. a jump zone **50**, from which to select the next broadcaster **22'**. For example, the jump zone module **67** may utilize a set of jump zone criteria to determine or define the jump zone **50** from which the next broadcaster **22'** will be selected. The jump zone criteria may be different for different channels or implementations of the various embodiments of the present invention.

With reference to exemplary FIG. **5**, in one embodiment, the jump zone **50** may be defined by jump zone criteria such as a minimum distance **51** and a maximum distance **52** from the location of the current broadcaster **22**. Specifically, the geographic location of the broadcaster **22** may be determined in a number of different ways, for example, via accessing GPS or location based hardware/software of the

content providing device **20**. For example, use of the system **10** or method **100** of some embodiments may allow access to the GPS or location data obtained by the device **20** itself, which, as above, may be a cellular phone, tablet computer, laptop computer, desktop computer, etc. Other embodiments may obtain the location of the users **22** by information provided in a corresponding user profile or other means or manners.

In any event, with the location of the user **22**, or current broadcaster known or estimated, in some embodiments the jump zone **50** may be calculated or determined based upon a minimum distance **51** and a maximum distance **52** from the user's **20** location. In this regard, the next broadcaster **22'** must be located within a radial distance from the current user **20** defined by the jump zone criteria, such as a physical or geographic region defined between the minimum distance **51** and maximum distance **52**. In one exemplary embodiment, the minimum distance **51** may be three (3) or five (5) miles and the maximum distance **52** may be fifty (50) miles, such that the next broadcaster **22'** must be located within a radial distance between three or five and fifty miles from the current broadcasting user **22**. Of course, other distances and criteria may be used and implemented within the full spirit and scope of the present invention, whether greater or lesser than three (3) or fifty (50) miles. In addition, for example, the jump zone **50** may be defined by only a minimum distance **51** or only a maximum distance **52**.

Similarly, at the end of the next user's **22'** broadcast, the system **10** and/or method **100** will determine or calculate the next jump zone **50'**, for example, based upon a minimum distance **51'** and a maximum distance **52'**, or other jump zone criteria. As can be seen, this creates a dynamic or moving jump zone **50**, **50'** that moves physically or geographically as the content providing user **22**, **22'** changes in accordance with the various embodiments of the present invention. In other embodiments, and/or in other channels, the jump zones **50** may be determined based upon other jump zone criteria, such as, for example, landmarks, states, countries, colleges, universities, geographic regions or areas, etc. In particular, rather than defining the jump zone **50** as a radial physical area surrounding the current broadcasting user **20**, some embodiments may define the jump zone **50** in different areas of the country or World.

As an example, if the jump zone criteria is a state, then the next broadcasting user **22'** may be selected from a different state from the location of the current broadcasting user **20**. For instance, if the current broadcasting user **20** is located in Florida, then the next broadcasting user **22'** may be selected from an adjacent state (e.g., Georgia), a next state in a predetermined list of states, or from any of the other states, excluding Florida. The same or similar process may be used to define a jump zone **50** with jump zone criteria being a different country, college, university, stadium, etc.

Once the jump zone **50** is defined (whether it is defined as a radial or other distance from the current broadcaster **20**, as a different landmark, country, state, college, university, etc., or as a zone defined by other jump zone criteria), the method **100** further include selecting the next broadcaster **22'** from within the jump zone **50**, as shown at **110**, for example, from a pool of or a plurality of potential broadcasting users. Specifically, with the jump zone **50** defined, there may be a plurality of users **22** that have indicated their desire to broadcast content next, for example, on a particular channel. Since some embodiments only allow a single broadcaster **22** at a time on each channel, the system **10** and/or method **100** of at least one embodiment may need to select the next broadcaster **22'** based upon certain selection criteria.

For instance, in some embodiments, the selection criteria may be defined as temporal priority criteria, meaning that the first user within the jump zone to indicate his or her desire to broadcast (and, in some embodiments who is available to broadcast immediately at the conclusion of the current or prior broadcast) will be given the opportunity to broadcast from his or her device **20**. It should also be noted that some embodiments or some channels may not have a jump zone defined, and may instead use the temporal priority criteria of the next broadcaster selection module **68** to select the next broadcaster. In such a case, the next broadcaster may be located virtually anywhere, since a jump zone may not be defined as a limiting characteristic in selecting the next broadcaster.

In other embodiments, the next broadcaster selection module **68** may use a ranking or point system criteria in order to define the next broadcasting user **22'**, for example, within the jump zone **50**, when a jump zone **50** is defined. In particular, in order for a broadcasting user **22** to obtain points or otherwise increase his or her rank, in at least one embodiment, the broadcasting user **22** can share content and/or complete tasks within the system **10** and method **100** of the present invention. For example, tasks may include completing or conducting consumer (or other) surveys, purchasing items (goods or services) via the system **10** or method **100**, sharing content via other social networks, broadcasting media as described herein, submitting votes for other broadcasts within the system **10** and method **100**, etc. Completion of certain tasks may result in the allotment of points or accumulating credits, for example. The more points or credits a user has, the higher his or her rank within the system **10** and/or method **100** of the present invention. Other tasks, opportunities, etc. can be used within the full spirit and scope of the present invention in order to accumulate or obtain points, credits, etc. and thereby increase a user ranking.

Accordingly, in at least one embodiment, the next broadcaster selection module **68** may identify the user or potential broadcaster within the jump zone **50** (if a jump zone is defined) that has the highest rank, or otherwise has the highest number of points, credits, etc. associated with his or her account or user profile. That user will then be the next broadcasting user **22'** and upon termination or expiration of the current or prior broadcast, the next broadcasting user **22'** will be given the opportunity to broadcast media from his or her device **20**, as shown at **112**.

In this regard, the broadcasting users **22**, **22'** must complete tasks and other opportunities to obtain points or credits and hope to outrank other broadcasting users **22**, **22'** located within the jump zone **50** for the opportunity to broadcast media via the system **10** and method **100** of at least one embodiment of the present invention. As provided above, if the broadcasting user **22**, **22'** wins the opportunity to broadcast media, then he or she is assigned a specific (often predetermined) amount of time to broadcast live on a particular themed (or other) channel. During the allotted amount of time, voting users **32** can submit votes attributed to the broadcast or broadcaster—positive votes may result in additional time allotted to the current broadcast or broadcaster, whereas negative votes may result in premature termination of the current broadcast or broadcaster.

Additional features of some embodiments may include the incorporation of a digital music service module **69** or digital media module which may include hardware/software components that allow content viewing users, such as voting users **32** and/or watching users **42**, to connect or sync a

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third-party or external digital music service to the system **10** and/or method **100** of the present invention.

Particularly, many users, such as content viewing users, may subscribe independently to or otherwise have an account with a third-party digital music service, such as Spotify, Pandora, Apple Music, etc. The content viewing user(s) may register or connect his or her third-party digital music service account with his or her profile or account with the present system **10** and method **100**, for example, by providing username, password or other account-identifying information with regard to the third-party digital music service.

When an independent or other third-party digital music service is synced, registered, otherwise connected to the system **10** and/or method **100** of the present invention, for example, via the digital music service module **69**, either the digital music service itself or the digital music service module **69** of the present invention may function to detect a song (e.g., a copyrighted song) that may be playing in a broadcast, e.g., by a broadcasting user **20**. Upon detection, the digital music service or the digital music service module of the present invention may simultaneously play the detected song, music, or other audio content from the viewing user's account or profile of the third-party digital music service (e.g., Spotify, Pandora, etc.) rather than, instead of, or in sync with the music that may be playing via the actual broadcast or live media stream. This may allow the content viewing user, e.g., the voting user **32** and/or watching user **42**, the ability to adjust the music volume. In addition, this may allow a broadcasting user **22**, the ability to select a song to play while broadcasting, for example, a song from a list of affiliated digital music services. At least one purpose of this aspect may be to allow an artist to be paid or compensated by the digital media service for their creative work.

Turning now to FIGS. **6A** through **6O**, exemplary screenshots of the mobile application **200** implementing or at least assisting with the implementation of the live media broadcasting system and method of at least one embodiment on a user device, **20**, **30**, **40** are shown. For example, FIG. **6A** illustrates a screenshot where, using a user device **20**, **30**, **40**, a user can create an account by providing certain identifying information such as an email address, username, password, etc. The user can then choose a role, as shown in FIG. **6B**, for example, by selecting to be a watcher, a voter or a broadcaster. A watcher can view active channels and broadcasts using the application or website; a voter can view active channels and broadcasts, as well as cast votes and assign points to other users; and a broadcaster can view active channels and broadcasts, cast votes and assign points to other users, and can broadcast live media through the application and within one or more of the channels or themes.

FIG. **6C** shows an exemplary or optional tutorial video which can help educate the user on the various features and functions of the present invention. Other tutorials and educational information may be included.

FIG. **6D** illustrates a plurality of topics, channels or themes which the user can select and associate with the corresponding user account. If the user selects one or more topics, channels or themes, the topics, channels or themes are saved to the user's account or profile and can be added to the user's list of following topics. For instance, FIGS. **6E** and **6F** illustrate exemplary user accounts and channels which the particular user follows or is subscribed to. Specifically, FIG. **6E** shows a list of a plurality of other user accounts (e.g., "Dominic," "Gabriel," "Wesley," and Ches-

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ter") which the user follows and FIG. **6F** shows a plurality of channels (e.g., "Surfing," "Wedding," "Tech," and "Apple") which the user has joined or subscribed. As will be described below, broadcasts that are provided by the other user accounts to which the user is subscribed and/or within the channels which the user follows will be arranged into a scrolling feed **210**. FIG. **6G** illustrates additional user account information including, for example, date of birth, social media links, a history of upvotes, etc.

With reference to FIGS. **6H** and **6I**, in at least one embodiment, the user account or profile will have a feed **210** or a display of topics, channels, broadcasts, etc. corresponding to the topics and other users to which the particular user account follows or is subscribed. As an example, the feed **210** shown in FIG. **6H** is for a user account that follows or is subscribed to the "politics," and "surfing" topics or channels. In this manner, the feed **210** shows a preview image, clip, animation, or cover photograph **212** of the channel and in some cases, the media that is currently being broadcast in that particular channel. In some embodiments, the current number of viewers watching each broadcast is displayed **213**. The user can select button **215** or an equivalent to view the corresponding broadcast in full screen or near full screen.

In addition, as shown in FIG. **6I**, the jump zone **50** for the broadcast can be displayed to the user. For instance, jump zone **50** is a location shown on a graphical map that defines a physical area surrounding the current broadcasting user **22**. In the view shown in FIG. **6I**, there is a queue of users or accounts with a next broadcasting account **22'** shown. More specifically, when the time associated with the current broadcast expires, the next broadcasting user account **22'** located within the jump zone **50** will be able to broadcast live media.

Furthermore, the user operating the application **200** is able to assign or award points to anyone or more of the user accounts currently in the broadcasting queue, or waiting list associated with a particular channel, theme or topic. In this manner, the points awarded to user accounts in the broadcasting queue can be used by the system or method to determine which user account will broadcast next. For instance, when the current broadcast time expires, the user account in the broadcast queue and within the jump zone with the highest number of points (e.g., as awarded by other users and/or as obtained via completion of tasks, as disclosed herein) will be selected to broadcast next.

Still referring to FIG. **6I**, the user is able to add his or her account to the broadcasting queue by selecting "Get In Queue" or an equivalent button. In the example shown, the user device currently broadcasting is located in "Los Angeles" as indicated by the location tag **216**. If the user is within the jump zone, he or she can be added to the queue in an attempt to broadcast next.

With reference now to FIG. **6J**, in some embodiments, a user can choose to "Stream Now" by selecting one of the listed channels, for example, as shown at **220**. Doing so will, in some cases, open a screen similar to that shown in FIG. **6K** where a user can enter a title and begin to stream. In other cases, with reference again to FIG. **6J**, the user can choose to be added to the broadcasting queue in one of the channels, as shown at **230**. Doing so may, in some embodiments open a screen similar to that shown in FIG. **6L** where a title can be defined. In the exemplary embodiment, the jump zone **50** is shown along with icons on the map associated with user accounts currently in the broadcasting queue for that channel. Here the user can view his or her current position in the queue as well as the location of other users in the queue. As

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shown in FIG. 6M, for example, the user can share a link or post a notification to the application 200 or to other external social media platforms (e.g., Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, etc.) to the broadcast. In some cases, doing so will award one or more points to the user, thereby potentially increasing the user's rank or position in the queue.

When it is the user's turn to broadcast, the application 200 can send a notification to the user, for example, an in-app notification, a push notification, email, text message, phone call, etc. FIGS. 6N and 6O are exemplary screenshots of the broadcast beginning and the broadcast executing, respectively.

Since other modifications and changes varied to fit particular operating requirements and environments will be apparent to those skilled in the art, the invention is not considered limited to the example chosen for purposes of disclosure, and covers all changes and modifications which do not constitute departures from the true spirit and scope of this invention. This written description provides an illustrative explanation and/or account of the present invention. It may be possible to deliver equivalent benefits using variations of the specific embodiments, without departing from the inventive concept. This description and these drawings, therefore, are to be regarded as illustrative and not restrictive.

Now that the invention has been described,

What is claimed is:

1. A method for streaming live media, the method comprising:

broadcasting, via a broadcast management system, a live media stream from at least one broadcasting device over at least one network to a plurality of content viewing devices, the broadcast management system comprising a computer processor, memory, storage device and at least one network communication device for communication between the at least one broadcasting device and the plurality of content viewing devices, determining a jump zone based upon at least one predetermined jump zone criteria,

selecting a user account from a plurality of queued user accounts, each of the plurality of queued user accounts being associated with a user device physically located in the jump zone,

stopping the live media stream from the at least one broadcasting device, and

broadcasting another live media stream from the user device associated with the selected user account.

2. The method as recited in claim 1 wherein stopping the live media stream from the at least one broadcasting device is based upon an expiration of broadcasting time.

3. The method as recited in claim 1 further comprising, prior to stopping the live media stream, if the live media stream receives at least one positive vote, then extending the live media stream by an amount of time.

4. The method as recited in claim 3 wherein, prior to stopping the live media stream, if the live media stream receives positive votes from at least half of the content viewing devices viewing the live media stream, then extending the live media stream by an amount of time.

5. The method as recited in claim 4 wherein, prior to stopping the live media stream, if the live media stream receives positive votes from at least half of the content viewing devices viewing the live media stream, then extending the live media stream by an amount of time equal to an initial streaming time.

6. The method as recited in claim 1 further comprising defining the predetermined jump zone criteria as comprising

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a minimum distance from the at least one broadcasting device, and a maximum distance from the at least one broadcasting device; wherein a physical geographic region of the jump zone is defined as being within the minimum distance from the at least one broadcasting device and the maximum distance from the at least one broadcasting device.

7. A method for streaming live media, the method comprising:

broadcasting, via a broadcast management system, a live media stream in at least one of a plurality of broadcasting channels, the live media stream being transmitted from a broadcasting device corresponding to a broadcasting user, the broadcast management system comprising a computer processor, memory, storage device and at least one network communication device for communication between the broadcasting device and a plurality of content viewing devices,

determining a jump zone based upon predetermined jump zone criteria corresponding to the at least one of the plurality of broadcasting channels,

wherein the jump zone of at least one of the plurality of broadcasting channels is determined based upon a physical location of the broadcasting user,

defining the predetermined jump zone criteria corresponding to the at least one of the plurality of broadcasting channels as comprising a minimum distance from the broadcasting user and a maximum distance from the broadcasting user,

selecting a next broadcasting user account from a plurality of queued user accounts, each of the plurality of queued user accounts being associated with a user device physically located in the jump zone,

stopping the live media stream from the broadcasting device, and

broadcasting another live media stream in the at least one of a plurality of broadcasting channels from the user device corresponding to the selected next broadcasting user account.

8. The method as recited in claim 7 wherein stopping the live media stream is based upon an expiration of broadcasting time.

9. The method as recited in claim 7 further comprising, prior to stopping the live media stream, if the live media stream receives at least one positive vote, then extending the live media stream by an amount of time.

10. The method as recited in claim 9 wherein, prior to stopping the live media stream, if the live media stream receives positive votes from at least half of the content viewing devices viewing the live media stream, then extending the live media stream by an amount of time.

11. The method as recited in claim 10 wherein, prior to stopping the live media stream, if the live media stream receives positive votes from at least half of the content viewing devices viewing the live media stream, then extending the live media stream by an amount of time equal to an initial streaming time.

12. The method as recited in claim 7 wherein selecting the next broadcasting user account comprises selecting, from the plurality of queued user accounts, a user account with a highest rank.

13. A method for streaming live media, the method comprising:

broadcasting, via a broadcast management system, a live media stream from at least one broadcasting device over at least one network to a plurality of content viewing devices, the broadcast management system

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comprising a computer processor, memory, storage device and at least one network communication device for communication between the at least one broadcasting device and the plurality of content viewing devices, the live media stream comprising an initial amount of broadcasting time,

determining a jump zone based upon at least one predetermined jump zone criteria, the jump zone comprising a physical geographic area,

if the live media stream receives positive votes from at least half of the content viewing devices viewing the live media stream, then extending the live media stream by additional broadcasting time,

stopping the live media stream,

selecting a next broadcasting user account, the next broadcasting user account being associated with a user device physically located within the jump zone, and

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broadcasting a live media stream from the user device associated with the selected next broadcasting user account.

14. The method as recited in claim **13** further comprising, prior to stopping the live media stream, if the live media stream receives at least one positive vote, then extending the live media stream by an amount of time.

15. The method as recited in claim **13** wherein, prior to stopping the live media stream, if the live media stream receives positive votes from at least half of the content viewing devices viewing the live media stream, then extending the live media stream by an amount of time.

16. The method as recited in claim **13** wherein, prior to stopping the live media stream, if the live media stream receives positive votes from at least half of the content viewing devices viewing the live media stream, then extending the live media stream by an amount of time equal to the initial amount of broadcasting time.

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